

MARCH 1913 15 CENTS

# AINSLIE'S

THE FASHION MAGAZINE



FICTION BY ETHEL TRAIN, ALLAN UPDEGRAFF, JOHN FLEMING WILSON,  
LOUISE ELIZABETH DUTTON, ANNA ALICE CHAPIN, F. BERKELEY SMITH,  
NEDDY SOUTAR, CONSTANCE SKINNER, WM. SLAVENS MCNUTT, RALPH STOCK



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E. W. HORNUNG  
KATE TRIMBLE SHARBER  
JOHN FLEMING WILSON  
F. BERKELEY SMITH  
JOSEPH ERNEST  
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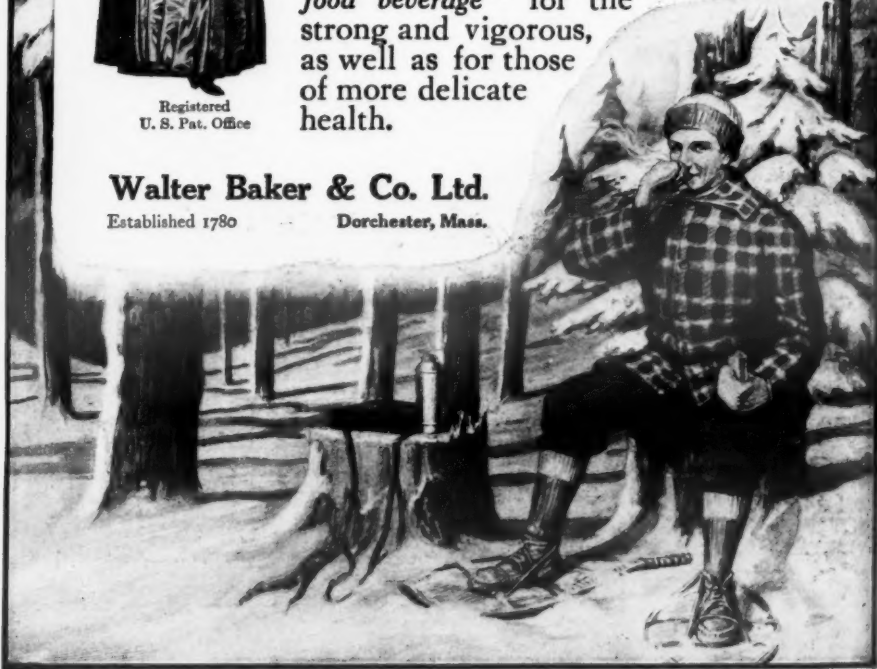
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# AINSLEE'S

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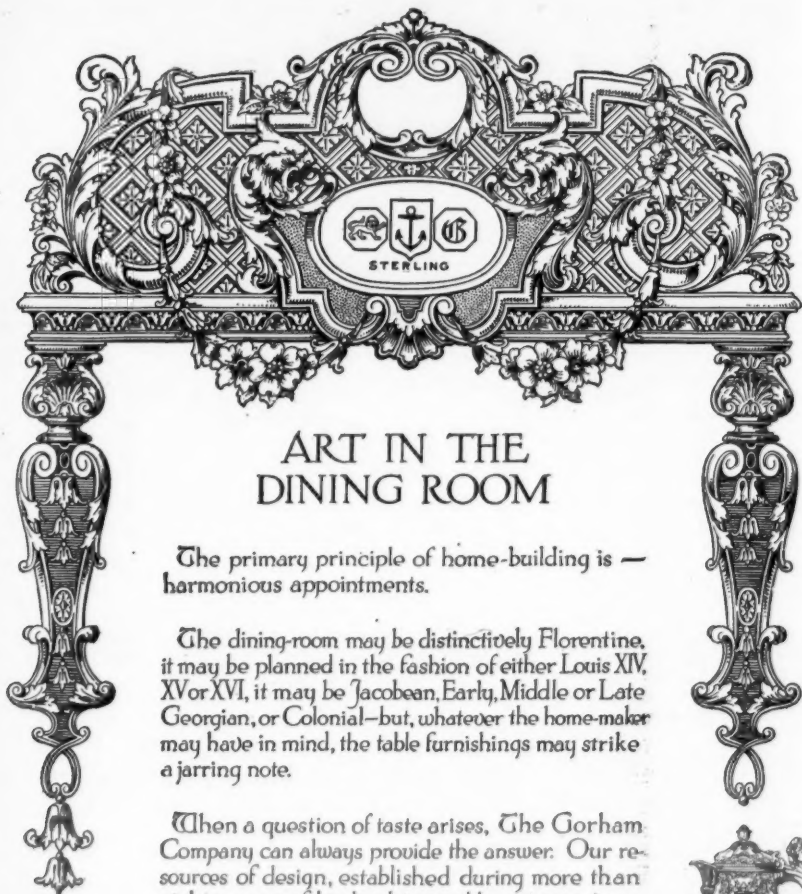
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## ART IN THE DINING ROOM

The primary principle of home-building is —  
harmonious appointments.

The dining-room may be distinctively Florentine, it may be planned in the fashion of either Louis XIV, XV or XVI, it may be Jacobean, Early, Middle or Late Georgian, or Colonial—but, whatever the home-maker may have in mind, the table furnishings may strike a jarring note.

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# AINSLEE'S

VOL. XXXI.

MARCH, 1913.

No. 2.



## CHAPTER I.

**S**PRAGUE'S cottage faced south. From a nook almost on the cliff's summit, it overlooked by day the glistening white crescent of a sandy beach, the blue Pacific, and a dark-green grove of Norfolk Island pine, sprinkled with the red-tiled roofs of other and more pretentious dwellings; and by night a velvety darkness, pierced at intervals by the moving lights of ferryboats plying at fifteen knots between Circular Quay and the numberless seaside suburbs that go to make Sydney harbor the paradise that it is.

Here he lived, for the most part in his pyjamas, with a hideous mongrel that he pretended to think was a black cocker spaniel, reading, smoking, and periodically going mad—or so the neighbors averred who had passed "The Haven," as his cottage was called, and heard him loudly declaiming to the empty air.

Indeed, one of them had taken the trouble to go further into the matter,

and, crouching at the window, had seen him standing in the middle of the room, wildly waving his arms, and hurling scathing rhetoric at the blank wall, after which he had carefully placed a chair in position, retired to the doorway, and groped his way to it round the walls of the room, while the apology for a cocker spaniel slunk under the table and regarded him, head on paws, with frank suspicion. Moreover, it was not drink, as so many had been ready to suggest, for a few minutes later he had taken a bulky pile of papers from a shelf, and sat reading far into the night. Couple with all this the fact that he was an Englishman, and what further proofs of insanity were needed by the practical, law-abiding citizens of Queenscliff?

Mrs. Adams, of the Ocean Kiosk, mother of a bevy of strapping and, from her point of view, marriageable girls, and dispenser of everything from tinned herrings to authentic details concerning the royal family, was wont to wag her head prophetically over Sprague's peculiarities when an eligible bachelor happened that way.

"You see," she would say, with a glance divided between the viceregal soda fountain and her eldest daughter, "you see what this lonely living will do for a man." And the eligible one sometimes saw, but had an annoying habit of going elsewhere for the remedy.

Sprague was blissfully unconscious of the suspicion he aroused until the advent of a tall, austere-looking gentleman in raiment that cried aloud "plain-clothes inspector"; and then it was that after two minutes' conversation the miracle had happened—both men bursting into laughter that called for restoratives on the veranda.

"If it were not so infernally hot," Sprague had said at parting, "I would put my hat on my feet and stand on my head at the front door regularly every morning; it would be a charity."

"That it would," agreed the perspiring inspector, mopping a bowler hat that somehow looked as if it ought to have been a helmet.

"I suppose it won't go any farther?" Sprague had added.

"Certainly not, sir; gentlemen's private affairs are safe in our hands."

And so it was that when importuned by Mrs. Adams, Bagnall, the local constable, could only shake his head profoundly over his frothing ice-cream soda.

"I only know what the inspector says to me, Mrs. Adams," he repeated for the third time, in accents sufficiently redolent of his native city and its particular quarter to quicken the pulse and loosen the purse strings of every wandering Englishman who heard them. "Bagnall," he says, 'it's all right; I give yer my word.'"

Mrs. Adams fastened a despairing eye on the wasted ice-cream soda which—in obedience to the law of suction—sank lower and lower as it traveled through its straw.

"That's all very fine," she said; "but it isn't good enough for us. Folks may be put off that way in London, where I've heard they can't call their souls their own; but Australia's a free country; we've got equal rights, and what

we want to know—what we of Queens-cliff demand to know, Mr. Bagnall—is what a raving lunatic is doing here among us."

Mr. Bagnall gravely shook his head. "I only knows—" he began; but Mrs. Adams was, as it were, launched, the restraining stays were cut, and nothing that mortal man could do would hinder her headlong rush into her natural element:

"What you police are for is more than I can fathom. Only the other night it was—I have it on the best authority—he caught up a boot and waved it over his head. 'I'll kill you!' he yells, and his eyes were that wild Luce—I mean the person who told me about it—nearly died of fright. 'I'll kill you!' And the dog ran yelping out onto the veranda, and all the satisfaction we get is—the inspector says it's all right."

Mrs. Adams paused for breath, and on the indignant silence fell the unlovely sounds of a straw imbibing air as well as soda.

Mr. Bagnall pushed the glass from him, and leaned against the counter, reflectively studying the toe of a sensible boot. The lady saw fit to change her tactics. Studiously ignoring the empty glass, she leaned over the counter and spoke in a confidential undertone:

"Between you an' me, Mr. Bagnall, what is he?"

The constable softened visibly under the new treatment.

"E's a remittance man," he announced.

Mrs. Adams sighed. This explained much, but not all.

"What else?"

"E's 'armless," Bagnall nodded his head reassuringly; "quite 'armless."

Such are the inscrutable ways of women—the very words intended to pacify had the diametrically opposite effect.

"Harmless!" bleated Mrs. Adams.

"I only knows—" began the unhappy constable.

"And so you'll wait till he's torn us limb from limb before you move a hand to protect us—you'll—" But

here the tirade ended abruptly; Bagnall had drawn himself to his full height, and tapped the counter with the air of one having authority.

"I — only — knows — what — the — inspector says to me," he repeated, with intense deliberation. "'It's all right, Bagnall,' 'e says. But I'll tell you this, Mrs. Adams, and for your own good: Don't you be sendin' Lucy up to spy no more. 'E'll be having you up for trespass, that's wot 'e'll be doin'."

Exactly what reception this announcement would have been accorded will never be known, for at that moment Sprague entered the shop.

He wore a striped white-and-green silk pyjama jacket, open at the throat, duck trousers, and white canvas shoes, without socks. A wet towel and a bathing costume were flung over his shoulder, and his hair, matted with salt water, clung to his head in untidy profusion. The dog that followed at his heels looked like nothing so much as an animated wet doormat.

"I want several things," he said; "perhaps you had better jot them down as I think of them. Is that ginger? I'll have a jar of that, and soap—a lot of soap, yes, three bars; tea—oh, a tinful; bacon—I'll take that."

Mrs. Adams barely repressed a gasp as he nodded indicatively at an entire ham suspended from the ceiling.

"Then there's marmalade—six tins; eggs, yes; and have you any dog biscuits?"

At the last word the doormat wagged a dilapidated stump of tail, and its whole anatomy in unison. Sprague pummeled rather than patted it on alternate ribs, its ragged body curving into reverse semicircles with each blow, while a red-flannel tongue lolled from its mouth in a canine laugh.

"Spratt's or Field's," Sprague chanted in time with the chastisement; "Spratt's or Field's, Spratt's or—Robert has a predilection for the imported article," he announced. "Spratt's it is."

Something very like apprehension sat on Mrs. Adams' homely face.

"We don't keep dog biscuits," she murmured.

"Then I'll telephone to town for some," said Sprague. "If you'll be putting these things into a grain sack or something, I'll be back for them in a few minutes."

The telephone box adjoined the kiosk, and it was while the wires were emitting the deafening buzz intended to signify that the line is engaged that Sprague noticed a crack in the weather boarding that separated it from the store. Through it sounds were coming quite distinctly. First the slamming of the mosquito door; then "Good morning, Mrs. Adams!" in a girl's clear, musical voice. "I want some pickled onions."

Sprague smiled to himself in the semidarkness; somehow there was something ludicrous in the connection of that voice with pickled onions. "No, not those—the sweet kind, and—Whatever's this?"

For a moment there was silence, followed by Mrs. Adams' voice, subdued to a penetrating whisper:

"It's *his*."

"His! Whose?"

"The young man up at the Haven; he's at the telephone."

There followed a light, girlish laugh.

"Take care he doesn't jump out on you, Mrs. Adams."

"He's harmless," came the rejoinder; "I have it on the best authority——"

Sprague's eye was shamelessly glued to the wall. The girl was sitting on the counter, beating a tattoo with bare feet on the boarding below her, and laughing with the whole-heartedness of youth and well-being. She could hardly be more than seventeen, he decided, although he still found it difficult to tell age in a country where girls are women at thirteen.

A towel was twisted turban fashion about her head, and a bright-colored kimono failed to hide the fact that there was nothing but a bathing dress beneath it.

"Harmless!" she gurgled; then, with sudden gravity and a potential wagging

of the head that jerked the turban over her eyes: "Don't you be fooled, Mrs. Adams; he's raving—stark, staring, raving. But he's my pyjama man, and I love him," she ended abruptly.

"You know him?" gasped Mrs. Adams.

"No, but we can see him from our veranda, and he wears the loveliest pyjamas—silk"—she ticked the items off on the fingers of a brown little hand—"white and green, white and blue, blue and green, blue and a sort of orange—that's four pairs, and they must have cost a lot— Oh, that reminds me; we can't pay for these things"—she drew a scrap of paper from the kimono pocket and handed it to Mrs. Adams—"but you can put them down, and it'll be all right. Father told me to say something else, but I forget what it was."

Mrs. Adams hesitated, glanced at the girl who smiled into her eyes, and was lost.

"Very well, Miss Meg," she said; "but—er—"

"Yes, butter, and tea, and—oh, one of those plum puddings in the little basins. I tried to make one, but it tasted horrid, so I gave it to the pyjama man's dog; he seemed to like it."

There was a violent agitation of the mosquito door, a peremptory scratch, and a whine.

"There he is!" cried the girl, and ran to the door. "Hello, Rags!" She knelt on the doormat, thereby setting the bell a-ringing in the back room, and imprinted a kiss exactly between the hideous brute's eyes.

Sprague silently hung up the receiver and went round to the shop. The girl was evincing unnecessary interest in the label of a ginger-ale bottle, and humming a little tune, apparently oblivious of the fact that the dog was licking her feet.

"That will be fifteen shillings," said Mrs. Adams.

Sprague counted out the money, and deposited it on the counter.

"Thank you," he said, swinging the bulky grain sack to his shoulder. "Good morning."

"Good morning," said Mrs. Adams. "And a Merry Christmas!" she added tentatively.

He turned on his heel quickly enough to catch both women looking at him.

"Thank you," he said; "the same to you. I had forgotten. Perhaps you had better let me have a plum pudding—if you have such a thing."

He smiled reminiscently as he climbed the steep sandstone steps leading to the Haven; and, stopping halfway up to light his pipe, caught a glimpse of a fluttering blue kimono passing round a bend of the hill below him.

Robert had apparently noticed it, too, for he sat watching it with mouth agape and ears as nearly pricked as their length and limpness would allow.

"Hullo, Rags!" said Sprague.

The dog's hind quarters wriggled in the dust.

"You don't seem to mind it," observed his master, "so why should I? 'The pyjama man,'" he mused, and smiled again as he trudged up the steps.

## CHAPTER II.

Christmas Day was the same as any other to Sprague. At seven o'clock the alarm, when in order, commenced to ring, and he stopped its clamor with a toothbrush wedged between the hammer shaft and the bell, rolled out of bed, set the kettle on the kerosene stove, and rolled in again, to sleep soundly, in spite of the sunshine streaming into the room, until half past eight or nine.

Awaking for the second time, he rose with a more determined air, and, after splashing under a shower bath composed of a riddled kerosene tin suspended from the rain-water tank, proceeded to boil two eggs in the kettle, muttering maledictions as he fished for them through a cloud of steam.

Breakfast was eaten to the accompaniment of light reading from a magazine propped against the sugar basin; and washing up—that most odious of household duties—was relegated to a dreaded future by piling the day's ac-

cumulated dirty dishes on a side table, where the flies held high festival until evening.

The solemn rite of shaving then followed, the razor being wiped on a sheet of typewritten paper from an inexhaustible supply behind the chest of drawers; and finally Sprague emerged on the veranda, to gaze upon the morning and shower opprobrious epithets by way of greeting on the squirming Robert.

In the ordinary course of events, he would have now flung a towel and a bathing suit over his shoulder and gone down to the sea; but this morning he was aware of a vaguely disquieting sense of incompleteness. Something remained to be done.

With the lighting of his pipe remembrance came to him.

"Gad, it's Christmas! Confound that plum pudding!"

It meant a complete upheaval of the day's routine, a postponement of the bath, an interference with the afternoon nap, and consequent interruption of the work. Mentally Sprague looked down the dreary vista of a wasted day, wasted purely for the sake of a mass of unappetizing and probably indigestible dough. Still, even with the thermometer at ninety in the shade, and a shimmering heat haze hovering over land and sea, it was Christmas Day, and as such demanded plum pudding of every Britisher from Cooktown to London.

Not until three o'clock in the afternoon did he again emerge, perspiring, but vindicated, to catch his towel and bathing suit from the line and whistle Robert from fly-catching operations on the veranda mat.

The sea lay before him, a shimmering sheet of incredible blue; and far off up the stretch of sandy beach a scattered, multicolored crowd watched the bathers sporting in the surf, or listened to the band in the shade of the corse pines.

But Sprague had neither eye nor ear for these things; he had found a paradise of his own, and, following a narrow, winding path round the hillside,

he at last came upon it, hidden among the sandstone rocks at the cliff foot—a tiny inlet, complete with sandy beach, blue, transparent waters, and raft anchored out beyond the breakers.

Whom it all belonged to had at one time been a subject of speculation with Sprague. An indistinct track led from the beach straight up the cliff face to a low, rambling house almost covered with creepers, and half hidden by an avenue of blue gums and abortive date palms; but he had long since given up troubling about the matter, partly because it was obviously impossible for anything but a goat to climb the cliff, and partly because he never troubled himself about anything if it could be avoided.

His undressing was a study in economy of exertion; then he waded into the surf, dived through the first respectable wave that presented itself, and headed for the raft with what he fondly imagined to be the Australian "crawl stroke." This necessitated an ungainly flapping of his legs and the almost complete immersion of his head; otherwise he would probably have seen what now met his gaze for the first time—a head bobbing serenely on the farther side of the raft, and a face that he instantly recognized, turned apprehensively toward him.

But Sprague was used to emergencies.

"Merry Christmas!" he said cheerfully, climbed onto the raft, and sank, dripping, on the rickety seat.

The owner of the head looked up at him with a little, wet smile.

"The same to you," she said, still clinging to the ladder, "although I haven't the faintest idea who you are."

"Does it matter?" Sprague queried earnestly. "Would you deny me a Merry Christmas simply because you don't know who I am?"

The girl regarded him with a glance of delicious uncertainty.

"Is that a joke?"

"Heaven forbid!" he protested. "But why were you hiding behind the raft? You nearly scared me out of my wits."

"I'm so sorry," she consoled. "But

you didn't look very frightened. You see, I wondered who you could be when I saw you start out from the shore, and—and I didn't quite know what to do," she ended lamely.

"But now," said Sprague grandiloquently, "the mystery is solved. There's no need to hide any longer. I am I."

"How very enlightening!" she murmured appreciatively.

"I'm certain you're cold," he observed paternally, "and you're far too puffed to get back to shore without a rest; why don't you climb up and sun yourself on the 'anxious seat'? It sways perilously, but it's wonderfully resting."

The girl blushed.

"Are you a married man?" she queried irrelevantly, and for the first time Sprague noticed that her lips were tinged with a faint blue, and that the hands holding the ladder were unnaturally white.

"You're simply perishing," he remonstrated sternly. "Come out at once!"

"Are you easily shocked?"

"If you don't come out I shall plunge into the cold, green depths before I have thoroughly warmed up, get cramp halfway to shore, and——"

"I wear boy's bathing things," she explained breathlessly as Sprague helped her up the ladder onto the raft, where she sank on the seat at his side.

"Awful thought!" he said. "And now if you will kindly give me your hands, one at a time, I'll try and rub a little life back into them."

"You see," she explained, her voice coming in little jerks from the vigor of his rubbing, "I wear these things because I had always looked upon this as my cove."

"Quite natural—quite," Sprague admitted airily.

"You see, father owns the land, and I own the raft."

"How awfully nice!" he added enthusiastically.

"So that strangers are really trespassing."

"Of course. Poor strangers!"

Her lips pouted faintly.

"Oh, they don't need to be pitied. There are lots of good coves farther round the cliff, and there's Manly, with a beach a mile long, if they only care to go there."

"Yes, I suppose they could," admitted Sprague judicially; "but all the same—poor strangers! Poor, poor strangers!"

A little white foot tapped the bare boards impatiently.

"You hold yourself comfortably aloof," she remarked scathingly.

"From what?"

"From the strangers."

"Naturally."

"Why?"

"Well, I can afford to; I am I, you see."

Sprague could see only the back of her neck, yet he could have sworn she smiled.

"I give it up," she said wearily. "The conceit of it!" And she plunged into the sea.

He waited until the pale-green legs had kicked their delicious owner a few yards from the raft, and then he followed.

It took an hour to establish the fact that he was not a stranger, but the time was well spent. The next obstacle was a trifle more difficult of approach. The girl sat in the hot sand, gazing far out to sea, her little, olive-brown face puckered about the eyes with the glare from the water. Sprague sprawled at her feet.

"But I'm not sure it's proper," she suggested, with a puzzled frown; "just you and me in bathing suits in my cove."

"As well complain at finding ourselves with wings in paradise," he suggested; "besides, it makes all the difference—you being you, and I being I."

"You're wonderfully comforting," she admitted. "But, after all, I suppose it's all right. I'm engaged, you know."

Sprague's face betrayed not so much as the flutter of an eyelid.

"What an extraordinary thing!" he exclaimed vigorously. "So am I."



Whether it was the strong light from the water, or whether—at any rate, the girl allowed her attention to wander from the sea and fix itself on a handful of sand that trickled through her fingers.

"But I don't think he would mind," she added thoughtfully.

"And I'm certain she would have no objection," Sprague agreed.

At this juncture Robert emerged from the rocks, where he had been conducting a minute search for lizards. He trotted straight to the girl, with a broad smile, and her arms went about his shaggy neck.

"Rags—Rags!" she cried.

"From the warmth of your greeting, I should have thought an introduction unnecessary," Sprague observed, "but I see there is some mistake; his name is not Rags, but Robert—Robert for at least a month, and thereafter—if by that time your mutual affection warrants the familiarity—Bob."

"O-oh!" said the girl. "And what is he?"

"He is a cocker spaniel," said Sprague.

"But isn't his coat too long, and isn't he too big? Look at the length of his body, and his head—"

"He is a cocker spaniel," repeated Sprague, gazing out to sea.

The girl edged nearer to him in the sand. He could feel, though not see, the movement.

"I'm sorry," she said, and the apology sounded almost boyish. "Of course he's a cocker spaniel."

Sprague turned toward her, and they laughed simultaneously the laugh of mutual understanding. There followed a pause, during which the girl traced idle patterns in the sand with a broken shell. Presently she looked up, and her eyes held a suspicion of a twinkle in their depths.

"What's she like?" she demanded abruptly.

"Oh—ah, yes," stammered Sprague, and pondered the matter, lying back on the sand with half-closed eyes.

"I see," he droned oracularly, "I see her hair. It is even as seaweed, strag-

gling over a rounded rock and caught in a tangled knot at its base. Her eyes protrude; yes, like those of the toad do they start from her head until spectacles bring them to a standstill. Her nose and forehead shine with intelligence and indigestion. Her neck is like unto a spiral stairway, and at her throat flourisheth a mole that would answer admirably as a collar stud. Her form is a——"

"You're a beast!" said the girl viciously. "Even if you have thrown her over, you needn't——"

"But I haven't," Sprague protested. "That is—I don't think so."

The girl's eyebrows met at an acute angle.

"You're surely not going—going on with it if you think that of her!"

"Necessity knows no law," he defended. "My worthy father considers it advantageous; we have the property—she has the money. I shall be the martyr of the family. My effigy will adorn the stained-glass window in the east wing."

The girl dug her hand vigorously into the sand, which pressed a gold bangle farther and farther up her arm.

"I think you're a beast!" she reiterated, with added conviction. "And I'm very, very sorry for—her. She deserves the stained-glass window."

"How about poor little me?" Sprague suggested humbly.

The curl of her lip was good to see. "We don't do things like that in Australia. Any man worth his salt would get out and work with his hands before he'd do that."

"That's the trouble," Sprague admitted resignedly. "If I had been reared in Australia, life, so far as I am concerned, would have taken a completely different aspect. My nature would have been sunny, my disposition——"

"You would have had to work," she repeated, with emphasis; "that's all the difference there would have been."

Sprague buried his face in his hands.

"Thus," he wailed, "thus is my first puny effort—the struggling seedling of industry that might—who knows?—"

have grown to the full maturity of mighty accomplishment—crushed at birth beneath the relentless heel of disparagement, nipped in the bud by the cold scissors of——”

The girl's eyes grew round with sudden interest; Sprague could see them through his fingers.

“You don't mean to say you *do* something?” she demanded incredulously.

“I'm trying to. Why not?” he pleaded brokenly.

“Well, you look—I mean, I never knew an Englishman who—no—oh, I'm so sorry!”

Was it sand, or was it the warm touch of a sympathetic hand that brushed his arm for the fraction of a second?

“You are trying, and it's not a success? I *am* sorry! But what is it? Do tell me all about it.”

“I will,” said Sprague, “on one condition—that you take afternoon tea with me at the Haven. I ate my Christmas dinner alone, and it was not a success.”

The girl looked frankly pleased.

“I'd love to,” she said; “but——”

“Come to the asylum,” Sprague tempted, “and I will prove to you that I am crazier than even the inhabitants of Queenscliff imagine.”

The girl laughed.

“That settles it,” she said; “but I must see if father is home yet. If he is I can't come; if he isn't I can.”

Sprague watched her scrambling up the cliff track, then turned to Robert with a look of interrogation.

Robert smiled.

### CHAPTER III.

“Father” was evidently “not home yet,” as Sprague was pleased to note by the approach of a blue kimono as he looked up from his sweeping.

“Whew!” exclaimed its wearer. “Why don't you use tea leaves? Everything will be smothered—and hold the broom at a slant—so.” She took it from him, and completed the task with dexterous touch.

The last match and cigarette end had hardly been whisked from the veranda steps when her eye fell on the clothesline, where fluttered a motley array of masculine attire.

“Trousers and shirts,” she announced, with a clothes peg in her mouth, “or anything like that, should be hung so that the wind blows through them—not at them—and by letting them overlap at the corners you use half as many pegs.”

Sprague watched her in grim silence.

“Is there anything else?” he queried presently. “Because if not I should be glad if you'd take a seat.” And he indicated his favorite chair, buried in cushions.

The girl sank on them with a happy laugh.

“I think that's all for the present,” she said. “Can you make tea?”

Sprague ignored the question, and proceeded to negotiate the boiling water, the while acutely conscious of an amused scrutiny following his movements from the veranda.

“Did you scald the pot?”

Still in dignified silence, he placed the tray—a bedizened advertisement of somebody's whisky—on the wicker table, and took a chair.

“When visiting a bachelor,” he announced sententiously, “you should say ‘What a snug little place!’ or ‘How clever of you to manage for yourself!’ or even ‘Oh, you bachelors!’ with a coy glance round the luxuriously appointed apartment.”

“But we're out on the veranda,” protested the girl; “and the apartment isn't luxuriously appointed.”

“Doesn't matter in the least,” he objected; “you should say it—if you want to be correct.”

The girl glanced out to sea, with the teaspoon suspended above her cup.

“I suppose I should,” she admitted thoughtfully. Her face was graver than Sprague had yet seen it, and, with something approaching alarm, he realized that she had taken him seriously.

“You surely don't think I meant it?” he laughed.

“Why not?” She turned toward him



with a frown so entirely out of place on her sun-kissed face that he almost laughed. "I want to be correct."

"For Heaven's sake, don't!" he pleaded earnestly. "Be yourself—you can't improve on it."

"Now you're being silly."

"No, indeed; I mean every word of it. We can't improve on nature; some of us think we can, but we can't, and there's going to be a very special kind of hell for those who pretend to be what they're not."

The girl sipped her tea and set the cup on the edge of the table.

"What is one to do?" she sighed. "Your preaching is just the reverse of father's, yet you both sound right, taken separately. I should like you to meet father," she ended thoughtfully.

"I should be delighted," said Sprague.

The girl turned on him with laughter in her eyes.

"There!" she cried. "That's what I mean. You know you're not delighted a bit; you just said that because it was correct. I want to be correct," she added defiantly.

Sprague gave his undivided attention to a thick slice of bread and butter, while Robert looked up at him with devouring eyes.

"Even he pretends," she pursued unmercifully, leaning forward to pat his absurd head.

"I should like to know in what way?" bridled his master.

"To be a cocker spaniel."

Sprague lit a cigarette, and flung the match over the veranda railing.

"That's where you make a great mistake," he said gravely, emitting smoke with the words. "Robert pretends nothing; that is one of the many superiorities of dogs over man. I do the pretending for him."

"I'm a beast!" said the girl suddenly and with conviction.

"No," he answered, "you're not a beast. Let me give you another cup." But the girl shook her head.

"You were going to tell me," she said presently, "all about it."

"All about what? Ah, yes, of course."

"Perhaps you'd rather not now?"

For answer Sprague leaned back in his chair and sent thin ribbons of smoke to hover on the still air above his head and disperse.

"Time was," he began, "when I wanted to make money. I forget exactly how or why, but at the time I was, of course, looked upon as a disciple of high ideals, and all might have yet been well but for a tiny question presenting itself—tiny, yet ordained to undermine the foundations of my towering aspirations, and level them with the ground. It was simply: 'What's the use?' If I do these things I shall miss a great deal. It will be like scorching through beautiful country in a motor car, enveloped in goggles and dust. 'No,' said I, 'I have no time to make of myself a monument to modern prosperity; I will live instead.' And so I left family and friends, to dream the strange dreams of a diseased imagination, set them down on paper in saner moments, and watch for their appearance, fearsomely illustrated, in the magazines."

Disappointment was clearly written in the girl's face.

"And you call that doing something?"

Sprague continued, unmoved:

"If you remember, I told you it was only a seedling, and if you imagine there was no work attached to its cultivation you're quite mistaken. I ate lobster and went to bed directly afterward for tragedies. I went through tortures, mental and physical, in search of the necessary material for any drama that an editor could announce as 'of absorbing human interest.' In search of humorous anecdote, I once stayed with a sheep-herder, and lived on mutton and beans for two weeks, and got nothing but grunts from the herder and indigestion from his beans. I worked my passage on a cattle boat from Portland, Maine, to Liverpool, living on barley water and margarine; and it was a full three days before I could bribe another man to do my work

and the cook to give me something to eat. I wrote a sketch, and acted in it, with a carmine nose and elongated boots, at a 'theater' in Spokane, Washington, where a ten-cent glass of beer entitled its purchaser to see the whole show. I——" But here he paused, breathless; his audience was in no way impressed.

"But why dwell on horrors?" he continued. "Suffice it that a man can write short stories—and, what's more, get them published—till he's black in the face without gaining recognition, and so—and so——"

"Yes?"

The girl was leaning forward now, chin on hands.

"I see I have succeeded in interesting you," Sprague observed.

"Go on," she commanded.

"I'm glad of it, because that is where the interest ends——"

"Please!"

"And the absurdity begins. I am now writing a play."

Sprague tossed away his cigarette and drew forth a foul, but beloved, briar.

"I'm sorry I can't provide anything more exciting, but I have at least done what I promised. You see, the opinion of Queenscliff is more than justified."

"But they say you threaten Rags—I mean Robert—with a boot, and shout 'I'll kill you!'"

"I do," admitted Sprague placidly. "The boot is a heavy brass candlestick; Robert is the man who loves my wife; and I—I am the injured husband. I rehearse every line; it's the only way to see how they go. But come into the—er—padded room; that is, if you're not afraid."

The girl perched herself on the bed and glanced curiously about her. The room presented an incongruous blending of art and toilet requisites, order and chaos. Directly above a dingy chest of drawers hung a beautiful, water-color landscape, half hidden by a festoon of neckties. A cottage piano occupied one corner, supporting a med-

ley of photographs and shaving paraphernalia—brush, stick, and razor cases neatly laid out on a copy of Miss Allitson's "Song of Thanksgiving." Another corner harbored a bamboo whatnot, its shelves packed with boots, and capped by an excellent bust of Edward VII. as a Freemason. From every corner peeped something of interest—a rawhide lariat, the god of plenty in bronze, an Indian tom-tom, a Papuan comb.

"May I look?" she asked eagerly.

Sprague nodded, and she made a slow detour of the room, coming at last to a stop before a writing desk.

At a glance she had seen that this was *the* corner of the room. Everything else had been crowded out to make room for what it contained—a litter of paper, a typewriter, and a mysterious-looking receptacle fastened to the wall. It had bulging pockets, clearly labeled one, two, three, and four, and she contemplated it with a puzzled frown.

Sprague's laugh broke in on her reflections.

"No," he said, "I don't 'save my hair.' That's the *work*."

"The work?"

"The play. You see, each of those pockets is an act, and as I thought of what the people ought to say and do I scribbled it down and popped it into one of those pockets. It always happens that when you are at work on Act I, you think of something really splendid that ought to have been in Act IV., and vice versa; and if you don't get it down there and then, you forget it as sure as eggs are eggs. I'm compiling now."

But the girl's attention had wandered to a picture tacked to the wall above the desk. It was a black-and-white reproduction of a familiar scene from one of the London illustrated weeklies—a theater portico in the rain, a stream of dazzling women and immaculately dressed men descending a flight of steps from the foyer to their waiting carriages. At one side an attendant was furiously blowing his whistle; on another a newsboy was shouting a

tragedy; while outside in the rain, where the wet pavements reflected the murky yellow light of the street lamp, stood a haggard-faced man, intently studying the faces that surged by him, gay, indifferent, bored.

"Not bad, is it?" said Sprague. "It's called 'The Verdict.' The poor beggar's trying to see what they really think of his play."

But the girl was silent. In a flash the picture had shown her, far plainer than words could have done, the high hopes and deeper aims of the rather frivolous man at her side. To create something vivid enough to hold and sway these people, vital enough to live after one's death—that was "doing something." Her own childish words recurred to her, and from that moment respect—a sentiment hitherto unknown to her philosophy—found a place in her estimate of "the pyjama man."

She was deeply interested; Sprague could see that, and he wondered vaguely why he wished to interest her. To be sure, she was pretty; but he had met many pretty children, and he failed to recall an occasion when he had tried to interest them. Perhaps it was because he had known that they could be so easily interested, and this particular one could not; or perhaps it was that he had lived too much alone of late; he was growing senile. He dispersed the problem with a mental shrug and lit his pipe.

"I've always wanted to write for the stage," he found himself saying a moment later, and continued because he had begun: "There are more thrills to it. The child of your brain is there in the flesh, suitably dressed in suitable surroundings, doing the things you have made him do. Then there's the applause, and all the hundred and one little things that are impossible to get at through cold print. You've never seen a real first night," he went on, with growing enthusiasm. "A play has to be an established success before it is produced in Australia; but at home, in London, people wait out in the rain in queues fifty yards long. They buy camp stools and chocolates and papers,

and sit munching and reading and waiting hour after hour. They wait because they go into cheaper parts of the house; but they are the ones who decide a play's success or failure.

"Presently a bolt is drawn, and they surge through the narrow doorway, past the ticket office, and into the auditorium, and wait for another half hour before the play begins. A little later the stalls and the dress circle begin to fill with men and women just as you see them in that picture; and scattered among them here and there is a critic from one of the newspapers. Each one of these thinks he can sway the public mind and make the play a success or a failure with a few strokes of his pen; but he can't. It all rests with the people who have been waiting out in the rain; and the wretched author hangs on their verdict, tearing his hair at every hitch, or grinning inanely at his own jokes. Then comes the first curtain, and he imagines every one discussing the merits of his play, whereas the men are thinking of tobacco or drink, and the women of clothes.

"This goes on for about three hours, and at the end of it there is applause, perhaps a speech by the author, and every one goes away to spread his or her opinion of the play in his or her particular corner of the city, some advising others of London's seven millions to see it, others telling them not to waste their time. It's all a gamble, and the author who has placed his stake—perhaps a year's work on the play, and five in getting it produced—on the wheel of public favor stands to lose all or win all at a single turn."

Sprague stopped abruptly, and looked out through the veranda doors. The bathers had gone, and the brief Australian dusk was settling down on sea and beach and cliff.

"It must be glorious!" said the girl. She had curled herself up on the bed, and was listening with the absorbed attention of a child who hears an enthralling fairy tale.

"If you win," said Sprague.

"Oh, whether you win or lose—but of course you'll win."

He laughed, and turned again to the window.

"Yes," he said, "I think I shall win this time."

"Then you've written plays before?"

"Stacks of them."

"And they were failures?"

"As plays, yes. I never even tried to get them produced, but they come in handy for shaving paper."

The girl sat up on the bed.

"You shouldn't," she said.

"It's all they were fit for; but this—this one is different. I know those others are bad, and that is why I know that this one is good."

He was still looking out of the window, his lower jaw slightly protruding, as if he were answering some challenge from the semidarkness.

The girl fell to studying his half-averted face. It was strong, she decided, kindly, and, above all, humorous. It was the face of a man she would have liked as an uncle or an elder brother. Then, with a startling suddenness, it occurred to her that he was neither, only "the pyjama man"—a stranger whom she had met a few hours before; and something stirred within her—a vague unrest, born had she known it, that very afternoon in her desire to be "correct." Yes, there was no doubt about it—she ought not to be there in his house, curled up on his bed, drinking his tea, listening to—almost sharing—his ambitions, his life; and sudden resentment took possession of her. It was *his* fault. He must have known better. What must he think of her?

Her feet slid silently to the floor, and Sprague turned to find her at his side, a slight, childish figure, with the kimono held tightly across her breast. "Good-by," she said, with outstretched hand.

He took it with mild surprise reflected in his face.

"Must you go—so soon?"

"So soon! I've—I don't know what father will say."

"Isn't it a bit unfair?" Sprague suggested. "It's my turn, you know."

"Your turn?"

"Yes; what's he like?"

The girl laughed in spite of herself.

"You ought to know," she said; "you've seen him. Good-by."

Sprague watched the blue kimono disappear among the wind-blown trees that hid the white house on the cliff's summit, then turned into the cottage with a puzzled frown.

#### CHAPTER IV.

It was a little after midnight when he thrust a loose pile of manuscript impatiently from him and strode to the door.

"Shut up, you old ass!" he commanded.

Robert had been barking in his own deep-toned fashion for the last half hour.

"What is it? Who dares?"

The dog trotted to the end of the veranda, and sat with ears pricked and eyes fastened on the flight of steps leading to the beach road below.

Two lights pierced the darkness at the bottom of them, and voices floated upward on the still night air.

"Sorry, old man; can't manage 'em. Legs simply—crumple. There, what did I tell you?"

The voice died away into a peevish wail.

"Damn these steps!" exploded another that Sprague recognized as his landlord's. "They're the curse of the place. Over our side we'd have an elevator, or an endless carpet, or——"

"Then, my dear Walker, install one. Queenscliff is yours, and the fullness thereof. Install one, and earn the everlasting gratitude of your tenants. Illuminating idea! Funicular railway—penny a trip—unsurpassed view of Sydney's world-famed harbor—picturesque glimpses of Walker's Forest! I present it free, gratis!"

"Thanks; but it doesn't help us any at the present juncture. Do you want to sit there all night, or will you try again?"

There were the indistinct sounds of

heavy breathing, a fall, and a muttered oath.

"Can I help?"

Sprague, in pyjamas and with bare feet, stood looking down on the two men, still clasped in each other's arms. They looked up simultaneously. In the semidarkness he could see only that they were in evening dress and decidedly drunk. Behind them loomed the dim outline of a large touring car.

The stouter of the two men disentangled himself, and rose heavily to his feet.

"Ah, Mr. Sprague!" he said.

"Good evening, Mr. Walker."

The land agent flicked the sandstone dust from his trousers, and tried hard to appear sober, the success of his efforts indicating long practice.

"This gentleman," he said, with a pronounced American accent, indicating his companion with a plump, be-ringed hand and a comprehensive wink, "suffers from periodical paralysis of the hind legs, and if you'll give me a hand to get him up the steps I'll be obliged."

The little gentleman referred to sat on the third step of the flight, gazing abstractedly up the beach road, where the motor car's headlight cut a clean, white slice out of the night. With his immaculate evening dress, neat gray mustache, and air of detached contemplation, he might have been sitting in the front row of the stalls at the Empire.

Sprague sternly repressed a desire to laugh, and descended the remaining steps to his side.

"He's not very heavy," suggested the land agent, as if referring to a sack of flour; but something in the other's attitude forbade approach.

"Why, sure!" agreed his companion, apparently to the empty air. "Mr. Bettington, this is Mr. Sprague, a—er—tenant of mine."

The little gentleman seemed suddenly imbued with life. He turned to Sprague with a rare smile, and held out a thin, well-shaped hand.

"How d'you do?" he said, with an apprehensive glance up the steps. "It's

very good of you. The spirit is willing, Mr. Sprague, but the flesh weak; my legs refuse their appointed task. Mr. Walker, with the best intentions, has succeeded in throwing me on my nose." He pointed to an abrasion wherefrom the blood was slowly trickling onto his shirt front. "What is your method of overcoming the difficulty?"

His accent was unadulterated Pall-mallese, and fell on Sprague's ears like music of bygone days.

"I think," he said, "the best thing will be for me to carry you bodily—if you don't mind."

"I'm in your hands entirely," agreed the little gentleman, "physically as well as virtually," he added as Sprague hoisted him onto his back and commenced the ascent. "I can't think what Bagnall can be doing; he never failed me before—"

"Perhaps Christmas has something to do with it," Sprague suggested.

"Christmas!" The little gentleman wriggled. "You don't say this is Christmas Day?"

"It was," Sprague corrected; "but by now I should think it's Boxing Morning—if there is such a thing."

"Good Lord!" murmured his burden, and lapsed into a silence that lasted the remainder of the ascent.

At the top of the steps they waited for Mr. Walker, who at last emerged, breathless, but triumphant.

"Dead easy!" he gasped. "It's all in the knees, Bettington. Keep 'em stanch, and you'll get there every time. Over our side—"

But the little gentleman, goaded to desperation by the other's achievement, had struggled to his feet, and was making an eccentric progress along the cliff path. Sprague hurried to his side, and was just in time to prevent his headlong collapse into a tree bush. For a moment he stood rigid against the supporting arms, and fixed an accusing eye on the Southern Cross.

"Confound my legs!" he breathed.

"I think you had better let me take you the rest of the way," said Sprague. And the quaint procession passed on

along the path and up a narrow avenue to the door of the white house on the cliff's summit.

With a hurried good night, Sprague turned to go, but the little gentleman detained him with a gesture.

"Come in for a few minutes," he said. "You must be exhausted."

Sprague mutely indicated his state of dishabille.

"Nobody but ourselves, I assure you," urged the other; and a moment later they entered a spacious room where a lamp burned low on the table.

After turning it up, their host sank into a deep leather chair with a relieved sigh.

"You must excuse me, gentlemen," he said. "My legs—Walker, you know where the things are."

"The things" proved to be a spirit tantalus, a siphon of soda water, and a box of cigars. Everything about the place suggested wealth and refinement gone to seed. The curtains, the carpets, the upholstery of the chairs were all dingy to a degree; but they had all been good—even now were tasteful—and against the wall stood a Jacobean sideboard that Sprague longed to fondle. It was a room unique in the colonies, and he was glad that he had come. His host, too, interested him more than a little, for here in the yellow lamplight Sprague had a better opportunity for studying his face. It was that of a degenerate patrician, refined, sensitive, puffed, and slightly mottled, the eyes blurred, the forehead coursed with swollen veins. His gaze was fastened dreamily on the end of the table, where a meal had been laid for one—a cold chicken and a plum pudding that Sprague instantly recognized as emanating from the Ocean Kiosk.

"It's too bad!" he murmured. "Walker, why didn't you tell me it was Christmas Day? Look at that!"

The land agent paused with his finger on the siphon handle, and his eyes fastened on the eloquent pudding.

"Meg made it," continued Mr. Bettington accusingly. "I happen to know, because I put half a sovereign into it, and the least we can do is to eat it.

Perhaps you will be good enough to help us, Mr. Sprague?"

"I should be delighted," said that gentleman; and simultaneously with the announcement a muffled laugh issued from a curtained doorway at the end of the room.

"I knew you'd say that!" cried the girl, bursting into the room. Her hair hung loose about the shoulders of her blue kimono, and a white nightdress peeped above and below it. She perched herself on the arm of her father's chair, her glance flinging a laughing challenge at the assembled company.

The land agent raised his glass, and leered at her over its brim. Sprague disliked the man for his own particular reasons, but at that moment he could have kicked him. Mr. Bettington tried to rise, and, failing, contented himself with turning in his chair.

"Meg, isn't this a trifle—er—unusual?" he demanded weakly.

"Of course it is," she responded, with alacity; "so is Christmas. Where have you been all last night and today—and, oh, dad, what have you done to your nose?" She stroked it gingerly with a little finger.

Mr. Bettington sought refuge in formalities:

"Meg, this is Mr. Sprague, a neighbor of ours. Mr. Sprague—my daughter."

In striped blue-and-pink pyjamas, Sprague rose and gravely bowed. The girl gave vent to a little gurgle of merriment.

"How do you do?" she said. "You did it very nicely, but I'm going to give it all away. Come, we'll all confess!" She clapped her hands at the notion, and assumed an attitude of mock penitence. "Mr. Sprague and I spent Christmas Day in bathing suits down at the cove, and had afternoon tea at the Haven—and you needn't eat the plum pudding, because I didn't make it; Robert ate the one I made, and I forgot to take out the half sovereign—there! It's your turn, dad."

Mr. Bettington looked helplessly



about him, and the land agent threw himself into the breach.

"Shop, Meg," he said, with a cumbersome attempt at levity; "nothing but shop. Can't sidetrack Walker's Forest, you know; it's got to grow even on Christmas Day."

"Then it oughtn't to," snapped the girl. "I hate Walker's Forest!"

Her father's delicate hand rested on her arm, and the fingers contracted ever so slightly, but Sprague saw it. The land agent drained his glass, and smiled complacently.

"Maybe now," he said; "but you'll think more of it by and by, won't she, Mr. Sprague?"

"I'm afraid I don't quite follow," said Sprague. "I didn't know there was a forest anywhere about here."

Mr. Walker laughed good-humoredly.

"It's our pet name for it," he explained. "Notice boards—that's my forest—'For sale. Apply F. J. Walker.' Land, Mr. Sprague, land! There's nothing like Queenscliff land; they're beginning to tumble to that. When I came here it was a howling wilderness. I plant my forest, and now they're beginning to clear and build."

"I see," said Sprague.

"And now they're only half awake," continued the land agent, warming to his subject. "Why, over our side we'd have had a city on Queenscliff by this. Australia's another England—she wants our enterprise—hustle—git—boost!"

"And possibly burst," laughed Sprague.

The other paused in the full flight of rhetoric. His beady eyes narrowed perceptibly as he leaned over the table and tapped it with a stocky forefinger.

"Young man," he said impressively, "if you want to make money—sure and quick—right here is the place to do it, and now is the time."

"I don't doubt it," said Sprague; but there was a disappointing lack of enthusiasm in his tone that seemed to jar on his hearer.

"It doesn't interest you," he asserted, with a hint of truculence.

Sprague looked into his face. It was not beautiful. Perspiration oozed from it, and the remains of the last whisky and soda trickled down one side of its chin.

"Since you put it that way," he replied, "I must confess it doesn't."

"And why? I'm a curious man, Mr. Sprague; I like to know these things; they're part of my business."

"Well, you see, the interest would be there if, as you suggested, I wanted to make money; but I don't."

The land agent favored Sprague with the scrutiny a visitor to the zoölogical gardens might bring to bear on an entirely new breed of biped; then he relaxed his attitude and selected a fresh cigar.

"Lucky man!" he sighed. "You remind me of the actor who, when his landlady asked him for money, wanted to know if it was an herb."

"Exactly," said Sprague; "I have a sneaking regard for that actor."

Mr. Walker contemplated the burning end of his cigar with a whimsical smile, while his host, who had shown visible signs of unrest throughout the conversation, fell to curling his mustache feverishly. The girl sat motionless on the arm of the chair, chin on hand, listening intently.

"I've met a few who pretended to despise money," said the land agent slowly, "but they usually came off their perch at the finish. There's no getting away from it—money talks all lingoes—all the time."

"Yes, a jargon of its own," Sprague admitted.

The other laughed. This laugh, the spasmodic upheaval of his gelatinous body, was part of his stock in trade and cost him little effort.

"Gee, but you're refreshing, Mr. Sprague!" he chuckled. "I like to hear you talk, but"—he drew a heavy gold watch from his pocket—"it's half after one—time for good little boys and girls to be in bed."

He struggled from his chair and crossed the room.

"Good night, my dear," he said; and,

to Sprague's utter astonishment, kissed the girl on the lips.

The action was sudden and peculiarly revolting. Sprague was conscious of a wave of relief as he noticed the girl's embarrassment; she at least resented it; then why—"I'm engaged, you know." The simple announcement, laughingly uttered down on the beach, recurred to him. Was it possible? This laughter-loving child of the sun and sea, and—Walker! The thing was ludicrous—unthinkable!

"Good night, Mr. Sprague," Mr. Bettington's thin voice broke in on his fervid reflections like a cold douche. "I hope we shall see more of you in future."

"Give my love to Robert," the girl added at the door; and Sprague found himself following the land agent down the avenue.

#### CHAPTER V.

The hall door had hardly closed when the girl ran back to her perch on her father's chair. One arm went about his shoulder, and her head rested on his.

"Rheumatism bad, dad?" she queried.

Mr. Bettington's hands fluttered to his knees and caressed them nervously.

"Deuced bad," he said; "I don't know when it has been so bad. Bagnall failed me—Christmas, you know, and all that sort of thing. If it hadn't been for that young fellow——"

"The pyjama man," said the girl absently.

"The who? Yes, come to think of it, he was in pyjamas—I should have been at the bottom of those infernal steps still. Nice young fellow that; bit outspoken, but do believe he's a gentleman, and strong—very strong; he carried me—literally carried me to the house."

The girl smiled—the tender smile of a mother—as her glance rested on the slender figure below her.

"Yes," she said, still with an air of abstraction, "I think he's strong."

"Where did you meet him?"

"Down at the cove; he goes there every day."

"Indeed! And who gave him permission?"

The girl smiled reminiscently.

"No one; it just happened."

"Just happened!" Mr. Bettington's mouth opened twice without emitting any sound. "M-Margaret, this won't do! It's the result of having no woman about the place, letting you run wild, picking up with any larrakin——"

"But you say he's a gentleman, dad."

Mr. Bettington patted the arm of his chair impatiently.

"I said I believed so."

"And you've often said you can single them out at a glance."

The girl took the thin, restless hand between her own.

"He was very kind to you, dad."

But Mr. Bettington refused to be pacified.

"It's not that, Meg; it's—you don't seem to realize your position. You're a Bettington, and you're engaged to be married. You don't seem to realize it," he repeated helplessly.

"I can't," said the girl.

"Then you must. I must make you. This tomboy foolery has got to stop. Running about in a bathing dress, talking to any one who talks to you—er—and that sort of thing. When is it going to stop? You're a woman now, not a child."

The girl's hand wandered over her father's head, and gently stroked the thin, straggling hair that had been coaxed from its natural resting place to cover an encroaching baldness.

"Frank told you to say this," she said quietly.

"What if he did?"

"Nothing. I think he's right."

Mr. Bettington was surprised into silence.

"And, dad"—the girl went over to the table, and stood absently prodding the plum pudding with a fork—"you were saying there ought to be a woman about the place—would you mind if we had one?"



"My dear child, we can't afford visitors."

"I know; this one won't be a visitor; I mean a boarder."

The word acted on Mr. Bettington like an electric shock, and the girl was at his side in an instant, soothing his agitated little movements.

"Listen," she said; "I've been thinking it all out. You won't let me go out and work, but why shouldn't I work here at home until—until then? A boarder—call her a paying guest if you like—would pay thirty shillings a week, perhaps two pounds—think how it would help!"

And Mr. Bettington thought, with an expression of utter disgust on his dissolute face.

"Might as well take in washing, and have done with it," he muttered.

But the girl's eyes were lit with enthusiasm.

"We needn't get rid of the sideboard or anything any more," she tempted. "We can keep ourselves and save ten shillings a week out of two pounds, and the interest—"

At the last word Mr. Bettington's head dropped between his hands.

"Yes," he moaned, "the interest."

"What is it now, dad?"

"I don't know," he sighed. "Ever since that Eden affair it's been growing and growing. I don't know. Walker has been very good, but—"

"Good!" flashed the girl. "Good—when he lost all we had!"

Mr. Bettington raised an imploring hand.

"For Heaven's sake, child, don't talk about it! It's over and done with. Remember, he lost a great deal, too."

"But did he?" The girl turned from her attack on the plum pudding, and faced her father. "It doesn't look like it."

"He could afford it," wailed Mr. Bettington; "we couldn't; that's the difference. Don't—er—offend him, Meg; it's all I ask of you."

She crossed and knelt beside his chair.

"Of course I won't. It will be all right—don't be afraid of him."

"Afraid of him!" spluttered Mr. Bettington, grasping the arm of the chair. "Who said I was afraid of him?"

"No one, dad; of course you're not; I mean don't let it worry you. Let me have the boarder, and everything will be all right. May I?"

Mr. Bettington glanced down at the pleading face upturned to his, and for the first time in many a month he so far forgot his own troubles as to notice that his child was growing into an undeniably pretty woman. The realization came as something of a shock. It meant so much; it meant that Walker would not wait much longer. But he dispersed the thought with another that he often summoned as a solace to his conscience—he was not pushing the marriage; he was positively averse to it, and beyond that point in his responsibilities he steadfastly refused to probe.

"Very well," he agreed, with the magnanimity peculiar to his kind; "have your boarder—a dozen of 'em if you like." He struggled to rise. "I must get to bed somehow. Where are my slippers?"

Meanwhile, Sprague was walking across the cliff with the land agent.

He knew that he had too clearly shown his dislike of the man. It was a weakness of his, and one he had never been able to overcome.

He wondered if he had been downright rude to him, and was relieved to notice that there was no indication of it in the other's manner.

Mr. Walker waved the stub of his cigar over his shoulder as they left the avenue.

"I don't know if you know it," he said, "but you're lucky to get in with those people. You won't find many like them around here. They were top dogs at home." He shook his head sadly. "But it's a different tune in the colonies, ain't it?"

"Very different," said Sprague.

"Jack's as good as his master out here," affirmed the land agent, "and thinks he's a blamed sight better. Don't I know it when I want a house

put up? It's a fight to a finish, and the best man wins. Bettington never learned to fight; never had to; and that's how he's got left. It's a pity—a great big pity."

Sprague succeeded in refraining from comment.

"Now, Meg's got sand," the other continued, "and she's got something else that I can't put a label on. Anyway, we don't grow 'em like her over our side. That's why she's got me—got me cinched, Mr. Sprague; and that's why, if a man came between me and her, I'd crush him"—he brought a fleshy fist down into the palm of his other hand—"like that!"

Sprague was still silent. Although the man and his uncalled-for confidences filled him with a disgust he could hardly control, he could not help seeing that Walker was in earnest; that for his own reasons, and in his own way, he loved Meg Bettington, and intended to marry her. The thing was repulsive, but a fact, and an unassailable one; moreover, Sprague suddenly realized that it had nothing whatever to do with him, and was vaguely annoyed at the strength of his own feelings in the matter.

"I don't wonder," he said, with an indifference that he was far from feeling. "You would have to go a long way to find the equal of Miss Bettington."

"You bet you would!" agreed the land agent. "It sounds queer, though, to hear you calling her 'Miss Bettington.' I've never heard her called that before—don't seem to fit her some way. Meg's nothing but a kid, and God knows when she'll grow up."

He sighed heavily.

"Don't you think it will be rather a pity when she does grow up?" Sprague suggested.

"I do," agreed the other emphatically; "I sure do, Mr. Sprague; but what's a man to do when her father's always harping on it? 'Wait a bit, Walker,' he says; 'wait a bit; she's only a child.' And I've waited. But I'm damned if I will much longer!"

"Thought I might as well let you

know how things are," he explained, after a pause; "then we all know where we're at, don't we?"

After which ambiguity he lapsed into welcomed silence.

As they approached the head of the steps he waved a hand toward Sprague's cottage.

"I made a big break letting you have that place," he remarked. "Twelve shillings a week! And the day after three offers of twenty-five."

He stopped suddenly, and faced Sprague.

"See here, Mr. Sprague, break the lease, and I'll refund the money you've paid. Is it a do?"

Sprague smiled under cover of the darkness. It gave him an unwonted thrill of pleasure to hear this man breathing audibly in his suspense.

"Oh, I'm fairly comfortable, thanks," he said. "Besides, what is money, Mr. Walker—an herb?"

## CHAPTER VI.

Manly was en fête. A surf carnival was in progress, and the prettiest seaside resort south of the equator was thronged with a typical, good-natured, pleasure-loving Australian crowd.

Stalwart young sons of the surf, burned to the shade of South Sea Kanakas, strolled about the corso in duck shorts and tennis shirts, bare-headed and barefooted, looking incongruous, but quite at ease among the faultlessly dressed women who often accompanied them.

Sprague wandered aimlessly through the throng, unconsciously noting, as an observant man will, many things that might or might not be of use to him in the future.

Robert trotted placidly at his heels, seemingly quite contented with his restricted outlook on a forest of legs and skirts, each with its distinctive odor that so effectually distinguished it from the one being in his world—his master. But presently a familiar scent assailed his nostrils, and his tail wagged him to the side of a large red touring car standing at the curb. In it sat an im-

maculately dressed young lady, who leaned over the door with surprising quickness and hoisted him bodily to her lap. Robert's greeting was effusive, but tinged with guilt. While he wriggled with pleasure and spasmodically licked the empty air, his eyes followed his retreating master.

"You don't want him," said the girl.

For answer the dog nearly leaped from her arms.

"So do I," she whispered in his left ear. "He'll come back."

And he did.

"I didn't recognize you," he said, lifting his battered panama.

"But Rags did," said the girl.

"You're honored," said Sprague. "Robert"—with emphasis on the word—"has never done that before."

"Rags didn't do it," Meg confessed; "I did it."

They smiled at one another over the car door.

Sprague had seen nothing of her for over a week, and she had never entered his thoughts during that time—the work was far too engrossing to allow of trivialities; but now he was conscious of a very keen delight at seeing her again. She had changed, he told himself; and the next moment was inwardly amused at the obviousness of the discovery. Of course she had changed; he had never seen her fully dressed before; but, no, he decided on second inspection that that was not the only difference—

"I wonder why you didn't recognize me?" she was saying.

"There's such a crowd," said Sprague vaguely; "and, then, I think I missed the blue kimono," he added, smiling.

"How do you like the disguise?"

Meg held her arms wide for inspection, and Sprague studied her gravely.

"Not as much as the original," he said.

Her hands fell to the cushions, and a queer little laugh escaped her. Then suddenly she leaned over the side of the car.

"Neither do I!" she hissed.

But Sprague was too thunderstruck to make answer, for the movement had

shown him that there was paint on her face!

She moved uneasily on the cushions, and cast a furtive glance up the crowded corso.

"Frank—Mr. Walker—will be back in a minute—" Her voice trailed off into the hubbub about them as she caught sight of an ample figure hurrying through the crowd. A frown puckered her forehead, and the next moment she had opened and shut the car door and stood on the pavement at Sprague's side.

"Where?" he demanded, with a quick flash of intuition vouchsafed to some men as well as women.

"Anywhere!" she answered; and they ran, leaving in their wake laughter, indignant glances, or expostulations, according to the temperaments of the people they jostled in their flight, until the blue Pacific brought them to a standstill.

"I've got a canoe beached beyond the pavilion," Sprague announced.

It sounded like a schoolboy plotting mischief, and Meg laughed in sheer delight as she gathered her white skirts about her and stumbled through the sand at his side.

He launched the canoe, and stood steadying it, knee-deep in the water.

"You'll ruin your dress," he suggested, with a broad smile; and if any further incentive were needed, this clinched the matter. Meg clambered in, and, seizing a paddle, knelt native fashion in a couple of inches of water.

The surf was running high, and more than once it seemed that the frail craft must surely be caught and crumpled like paper; but, with careful manipulation, the waves were met bow on, and presently it emerged beyond the breakers, carrying a foot of water and its drenched, but laughing, crew.

The girl's hat, a one-time dainty confection of white straw and paisley silk, hung, dripping, about her face; and she rubbed her cheeks vigorously with the salt water it supplied while Sprague was bailing with a marmalade tin.

Presently he looked up, and became

instantly engrossed in the progress of the carnival.

"We can see splendidly from here," he said eagerly. "What on earth are they doing?"

Meg's eyes sparkled with excitement.

"Ah," she said, "we don't get first-night plays, but we do have surf carnivals. That's the landing of Captain Cook. Look—there's his sloop, and there he is in the whaleboat going ashore. Those are the aborigines—see them squatting in semicircles on the sand?"

A gunshot boomed from the sloop anchored beyond the breakers, and echoed up the cliffs beyond the beach.

"There! He's landed, and the natives are friendly. They were at first, you know, but afterward they came out in canoes at night and attacked them. They're having a corroboree now. Look! That man striped like a zebra is a chief; he leads them. See, now they're off!"

Along the glistening beach the strange procession wound its way—capering aborigines, wildly waving clubs and boomerangs; less demonstrative sailors from the sloop; and finally the sedate figure of Captain Cook in full uniform, all receiving a deafening ovation from the crowds that lined the corso.

"It's better than last year," said Meg. "They had Venus rising from the sea then. I knew the girl who did Venus, and she said it was awful; something went wrong, and she was nearly drowned; but they told her she must go through with it or spoil the whole procession, so she was carried out of the water, half fainting, and plumped into the huge shell on wheels that was waiting on the beach, and dragged the whole length of the corso, trying to smile. Every one said she looked so pale and pretty—oh, look! They're shooting the breakers!"

And, sure enough, they were. Captain Cook and his coterie had hardly disappeared when a score of young men dashed down the beach and plunged headlong into the surf.

Through an endless succession of foam-capped waves they dived, like a school of playful porpoises, until they were some two hundred yards from the beach; then, taking advantage of a momentary lull, they waited, treading water and watching for a suitable wave. It was not long in coming. A gigantic, foam-crested roller seethed toward them, and at a given signal they rose halfway to its summit and shot down its endless, emerald-green side, headlong, for shore.

It was not the first time that Sprague had seen this done, and it fascinated him.

"I'd give a year of my life to be able to do it," he said.

Meg regarded him with frank wonderment.

"You've been everywhere," she said, "and done everything, and can't shoot the breakers?"

"I'm afraid so," he sighed.

"Then I'll teach you," she cried.

"When—where?"

"Now—at the cove."

It seemed quite in keeping with the madness of the moment, and Sprague was forced to paddle like one possessed to keep the canoe's bow from edging his way under the strength of the girl's strokes.

The canoe had hardly touched the sandy beach of the cove when Meg leaped from it.

"Shan't be a minute," she called over her shoulder, and scrambled up the cliff track.

Sprague's bathing costume was in the bottom of the canoe, wet and uninviting, but he was ready when Meg returned in the familiar blue kimono, swinging a billy can and humming a little tune of her own.

"Thought we might have some tea," she explained. "But first of all—come along!" And, throwing the kimono from her, she ran down to the sea.

The lesson in breaker shooting was a strictly serious business, and not the unadulterated joy Sprague had expected. It appeared that the chief feature of the art lay in selecting a suitable wave, and this was not as easy as it

appeared. Moreover, it necessitated allowing an indefinite number to pass over one's head before the right one presented itself.

"Throw all your weight forward," Meg ordered for the third time. "Hunch your shoulders a little—keep your head down; it gives more for the wave to grip—there—so—now—"

Sprague blindly obeyed, and—at last! He found himself cradled in foam, gliding swiftly and ever faster, with the music of rushing waters in his ears. The sensation was like nothing he had ever experienced. It seemed, during those brief moments, that it must be a glorious thing to drown.

The wave carried him into shallow water, and he was brought back to things practical by a rippling laugh.

"You did it!" cried Meg. "You really did it!"

"Yes, I did it," grinned Sprague triumphantly.

"And you've earned tea. Come along."

Under their joint administration, the billy was soon boiling, and they drank in turn tea that to Sprague had never tasted so good.

During all that golden afternoon they had avoided any reference to their harebrained flight. They had accepted the strangely vivid pleasure of their meeting as a thing too blessed to analyze—a holiday snatched from convention and held immune from consideration of cause and effect. But now, in the solitude of the cove, with nothing to distract their attention, a silence fell between them that, in the subtle way of silences, seemed to demand an encroachment on forbidden ground, and Meg was the first to make it.

"I've been correct for a whole week," she said suddenly. "This is the reaction." She leaned back on the sand with a little sigh of content. "If you only knew the relief!"

Sprague studied her gravely.

"I can quite imagine it," he said. "I like the reaction."

"So you said before. It's rather a pity, because father, Frank, and the boarder like the other best."

"The boarder!"

"Oh, of course, I forgot, you don't deal in gossip—we've got a boarder."

"Really! Star or otherwise?"

"Very much star. She wears clingy clothes and smokes."

Sprague sat upright in the sand.

"You don't say!" he breathed. "And Mrs. Adams—"

Meg took time to wriggle into a position seemingly more consistent with the dignity of her news. Sprague set traps for, and reveled in, these remnants of her childhood.

"Mrs. Adams says—" she began.

"Of course she does," he broke in indignantly. "The idea!" But there he stopped. The girl had turned from him, and sat staring out to sea with a little frown.

"What does she say?" he queried.

But there was no response.

"Please!" he pleaded.

"You're laughing at me," she said quietly. "I believe you're always laughing at me."

The woman in Meg had a habit of supplanting the child with disconcerting abruptness. Sprague was witnessing the rather bewildering process for the second time.

"I'm not," he protested; "indeed, I'm not. Surely you don't class yourself with Mrs. Adams?"

"There are no classes in Australia," she answered.

"Oh, that won't do!" laughed Sprague. "There are class distinctions in London, and in the Cannibal Islands, and they're nowhere more marked than in countries that think they have none."

Apparently this failed to convince. Meg still looked out to sea.

"I suppose we are funny," she mused. "She thinks so, too—the star boarder; you can see the laughter behind her eyes when she talks to you. She seems to be saying 'What a queer little colonial worm!' I hate her!"

Sprague seldom improved an occasion, but there was genuine trouble in the girl's eyes.

"You shouldn't hate," he said gently; "it's hardly ever worth while, and such

an uncomfortable state of mind for a healthy being. Just laugh back."

"I can't," said Meg; "there's nothing to laugh at."

"Avoid talking to her, then."

"How can I when we live in the same house? She's our guest, although she's a paying one. Besides, she won't be avoided; she's tremendously friendly—or pretends to be."

A sudden thought flashed into Sprague's brain.

"She painted your face," he said.

An answering flush mounted to Meg's cheeks.

"I didn't think you noticed," she said.

"Noticed! After Spokane, I believe I can smell the stuff!"

"It was an experiment. She said everybody does it, and it makes such a difference."

Sprague emitted a sound usually described as "Pshaw!" although it is nothing like it, and flung a pebble into the sea with unnecessary force.

"It does," he said emphatically. "Of course," he added, after a pause, "you can always kick her out. 'Ask for her room,' I believe is the right term."

"She's paying two pounds a week," said Meg thoughtfully. "I wonder what she is?"

Her hearer preserved a discreet silence.

"She's very anxious to meet you," she added presently.

Sprague was lying face downward on the sand, and out of the corner of her eye Meg saw his body stiffen perceptibly.

"See me?"

The girl's lips were slightly compressed; the flush still lingered on her face.

"Yes; she made me promise to take her to the Haven."

Sprague wriggled into a sitting posture, consternation written in every line of his sunburned face. Meg nodded her head dubiously.

"I told them," she said. "I just had to, or burst."

"Told them what?"

"About the—the work."

She caught up a handful of sand, and spread it on her palm with a little finger; then flung it from her, and turned to him.

"It was at the kiosk," she said deliberately. "She goes there every morning for bull's-eyes after bathing—she says that somehow bull's-eyes and bathing go together—and she was laughing with her eyes—while Mrs. Adams told her about your—your rehearsals; and I told them," she ended defiantly. "Does it matter?"

Sprague considered a moment, then lay back on the sand and laughed.

"Not a bit," he said; "but poor, dear Mrs. Adams! What will she do without her lunatic? And the star boarder—I suppose she laughed with something more than her eyes when you had finished?"

"No, she didn't laugh then; I think that's why she wants to come; she's tremendously interested."

"Devilish good of her."

"She said 'Show me your prodigy,' and gave me no peace until I promised to take her—to-morrow afternoon. I expect you'll like her. Dad does."

"I dislike meeting strangers," said Sprague, with emphasis.

"You didn't seem to mind me."

He sighed wearily.

"Must I again propound that you are *you*, and I am *I*?" The star boarder is quite another matter."

A week ago Meg would have laughed at this. To-day she was silent. Sprague was silent, too.

"But you'll be at home?" said Meg presently.

Sprague scrambled to his feet.

"Oh, I'll be at home," he said; "but the place is in a shocking state"—he shook his fist at her threateningly—"and after getting me into the soup, by Heaven, Meg, you'll have to help me out!"

It was the first time he had called her by that name, and, neatly as it had been done, it carried the same thrill that it has ever done to one who hears it uttered for the first time by those who count.



"I'll be there after lunch," said Meg, without looking up.

## CHAPTER VII.

Sprague was in his shirt sleeves at the typewriter when Meg tiptoed across the veranda and peeped in. He was frowning heavily, and looked a very different person from her surf-shooting pupil. She had almost decided to come again, a little later, when he looked up with a smile, and leaned back, mopping his forehead.

"You're just in time," he said. "Come and curtain the last act for luck—I've finished."

She leaned over his shoulder and laboriously ticked out the letters, then stood back, reviewing her work.

"Very fine!" Sprague commented, and pushed back his chair. "Visitors!" he groaned, gazing helplessly about him.

"You're not very complimentary," said Meg.

"Visitors!" he repeated, kicking a stray boot under the bed, and tearing a dirty towel from its nail beside the washstand. "Of course," he added, "this is sheer bluff; I'm really all of a flutter. What ought we to do?"

But Meg had crossed the room, and was lost in contemplation of the picture in the corner. The attendant was still blowing his whistle, the newsboy shouting his tragedy, and the brilliant crowd streaming down the steps from the foyer.

"I've wanted to see this all the week," she said.

"And why didn't you?" Sprague leaned across the table, watching her amusedly.

"I'm too busy now. Besides——" But the sentence remained unfinished. "You remember saying you'd give a year of your life to shoot the breakers?" she added presently. "Well, I'd give five of mine to see all that."

"Some day you will," said Sprague.

She shook her head slowly, without answering.

"In the meantime"—he crossed to her side, and, reaching up, tore the pic-

ture from the wall—"take it, and do the next best thing—dream about it. You'll find that just as good, if not better, than the reality."

"You think I shouldn't appreciate your London?"

"How could you after—this?" He nodded toward the open doorway, through which glimpsed the blue Pacific, reflecting the clear sunlight in a myriad points of flashing light.

"Ah, but that's because you've seen both," said Meg. "This is new to you—that would be new to me. I want to see yellow, choking fog—streams and streams of umbrellas—wet pavements—barrel organs—and the oil lights on costers' barrows in the Mile End Road. Father used to talk about it to other men sometimes, though never to me—I heard him tell some one that it might unsettle me. But you'll tell me, won't you?"

"Some day," said Sprague. "But now for the star boarder—what do we do?"

Meg seated herself on the table, tightly clasping the rolled-up picture.

"I don't see why we need do anything," she said.

Sprague regarded her with a quizzical half smile before seizing on the suggestion.

"Nor I," he agreed, dragging the stray boot defiantly into the middle of the room, and reinstating the dirty towel. "Why should we try to appear other than we are?" he rambled on, disarranging a pile of magazines on a side table. "If laughing ladies who wear clingy clothes and smoke choose to visit us uninvited, they must take us as they find us; we don't want them—we——"

Simultaneously with Robert's deep-toned growl, Meg's swinging foot came into contact with Sprague's shin, a light footfall sounded on the veranda, and a moment later the door was darkened by the star boarder.

A tall, refined-looking woman, with a supercilious mouth, a surprising complexion, and a mass of suspiciously auburn hair—such was Sprague's instantaneous mental photograph of the

visitor, to be developed and studied at leisure.

"May I come in?" she asked; and it was at once apparent that her voice was her charm, its musical timbre lifting even this simple request above the commonplace.

"Please do," said Sprague, standing aside for her to enter. "I must ask you to excuse the state of the room—bachelor's quarters, you know. Won't you sit down?"

Meg seemed quite unaware that anything was expected of her, and watched the rather awkward situation from her perch on the table as if it were a scene enacted for her benefit.

While Sprague struggled manfully with the kerosene stove in the kitchen, the visitor glanced about her.

"How cozy!" she observed; but Meg saw only laughter behind her eyes, and her fingers tightened about the picture on her lap. The other turned to her with an obviously assumed embarrassment.

"Do you think he will mind?" she whispered uncertainly.

Meg glanced down at her swinging feet.

"No," she said, "I don't think so."

The visitor looked suitably relieved, and sat toying with her gloves. The silence was growing oppressive when Sprague returned. She leaned forward eagerly.

"I don't know what you'll think of this intrusion," she faltered prettily. "I thought—it's rather funny—I thought you would be a sort of Queenscliff prodigy in—pyjamas, and—"

"I'm sorry to disappoint you," said Sprague, with a slow smile. He nodded toward the kitchen. "I can retire and put them on if you'd rather."

The woman laughed softly, and their eyes met. In that glance each recognized the other as a kindred denizen of another world, and found mutual comfort in the fact.

She leaned back in the chair, holding her gloves behind her head in an attitude best suited to set off the slim perfection of her figure.

"Reports were conflicting," she said.

"Mrs. Adams, for instance, was positively entertaining about you until Miss Bettington here stood up for you so splendidly."

The words were a virtual pat on the head for a good child, and Meg writhed under them.

"That was what brought me—the red rag waved at the bull, you know—I just had to see the Queenscliff playwright." She smiled apologetically. "My stage name is Nina Holmes—"

The thunderbolt was launched, and the actress, watching its devastating flight, reveled in Sprague's amaze.

"You may have heard it," she suggested.

"Heard it!" he breathed. "I saw you three times as *Portia*, twice as *Magda*, and your photo as *Madame Butterfly* is on the piano yonder; but I never recognized—who would have dreamed—"

Miss Nina Holmes toyed effectively with a necklace of turquoise matrix during a pregnant pause.

"I was ordered complete rest for six months, and Australia has always appealed to me," she said. "Their women are so charming, don't you think? Then the Olympic is being redecorated; the new scheme is to be white and gold, and I'm doing away with the pit and gallery—oh, I know—but I'm just going to prove that they *can* be done away with."

"Poor little Olympic!" sighed Sprague.

"You think it won't stand the test?"

"I'm quite sure it wouldn't—with-out you."

Miss Nina Holmes looked pleased. What a compliment lacked in subtlety was amply atoned for in sincerity. She recognized this blunt and brown young man as a genuine worshiper.

The hissing of the kettle called Sprague to the kitchen, whence he duly emerged with the bedizened tray and tea.

Meg continued to sulk unblushingly, but Sprague failed to notice it. He was entertaining Nina Holmes, and for the moment all else was subsidiary to the miraculous fact.



"Milk and two lumps," directed the goddess; and, having no lump sugar, Sprague gauged the amount in a teaspoon.

"And now," he said, handing her the cup, "what do you think of our harbor, our post office, and our Manly?"

There was a laugh behind the words.

"I love them!" gushed Miss Holmes. "And the sun—the blessed sun—day after day. Isn't it a thousand pities it is all so far away? If Manly were in Europe all Europe would be in Manly."

She looked out through the open doorway, then turned abruptly.

"You live here—alone—the year round?"

"Yes," said Sprague.

"And you are content?"

"There's room to move and think," he answered, smiling. "Yes, I'm content—for the present."

"And you write plays?"

"I have written one."

"May I see it?"

Sprague rose slowly, and, taking a loose manuscript from beside the typewriter, placed it in her hands without speaking.

In the theatrical world, and even out of it, Nina Holmes was known as the fairy godmother of the unknown playwright. She seemed to take a keen delight in producing plays that every other London manager had flung from him in disgust—and, what was still more surprising, succeeded in hitting on a success three times out of four.

She had received many plays in her time, some with stamps inclosed and a pleading or threatening, but always protracted, letter; others from the author in person, with profuse apologies or blatant braggadery; and as she sat with this one on her knee, while she balanced her parasol more securely against the arm of her chair, she told herself that at least the manner of its presentation was refreshing.

She had scarcely turned the first leaf, however, before a slim index finger descended on the page.

"Ah, this won't do," she said. "No soliloquies—we can't do with solil-

oquies——" Her voice trailed away as the thread of interest carried her on, and for the next half hour she skimmed the pages without interruption.

Sprague lit his pipe without asking permission, and sat facing her, tense and motionless, his eyes riveted on her face. Sometimes she smiled, and Sprague smiled, too; at others her lips moved, or her delicately arched eyebrows contracted in a frown. Sprague's face unconsciously caught and reflected every shade of expression, for his work, the real work that had been back of all, half his life, was in the hands of the assayer.

The hollow ticking of the alarm clock and the crisp rustle of paper alone fell upon the silence as the minutes slipped by, until at last she laid the final sheet face downward on the others and looked out through the doorway.

A slow flush crept over Sprague's face; she was an infernal time speaking; was it effect, or—— He went out to the veranda, and knocked his pipe out on the railing.

"Well?" he suggested. The query leaped from his lips in spite of himself; his heart was actually making itself felt.

"The idea is good," she said, turning with an abruptness that was one of her many mannerisms; "but you knew that. It would have to be slashed at a lot; but—*Lorette*——" Again she turned to the glittering Pacific.

Sprague paced the room. The flush was still on his face, and suppressed excitement showed in his stride.

"Yes," he said, "I knew the idea was good, and I thought I had treated it rightly. Of course it's all in *Lorette*—I made her for you."

"Thank you," said Miss Holmes, with a slight inclination of the head and a fleeting smile. She had hoped he wouldn't say that—they all said it—but as her eyes rested surreptitiously on his frank, almost boyish profile, she felt instinctively that he spoke the truth. Yes, she distinctly liked the boy, and his *Lorette* was promising; but she

was far too clever a woman to be enthusiastic about it. A long experience with "unknowns" had taught her to administer encouragement in sufficient doses to stimulate, not intoxicate; and although at this particular juncture—when seventeen puerile plays reposed at the bottom of her trunk, and lack of suitable material had driven her to the distracted consideration of a revival as the opening feature at the Olympic—she could have thrown her arms about his neck and wept for joy, she merely traced a pensive pattern on the bare boards of the floor with her parasol.

"You have been on the stage?" she said presently.

There was a nervous catch in Sprague's laugh.

"So-called—in America," he said. "I was everything from comic relief to abused hero in a third-rate stock company for six months."

"Ah!"

"I had to assume the accent, or I should have been howled off, and that's what finished me. I found it coming too easily—off as well as on—and when I met an Englishman who took me for an American I decided it had gone far enough."

"Oh, you Englishmen!" laughed Miss Holmes. "And yet you wonder why you are disliked."

"Not the very least," returned Sprague cheerfully.

The actress fell to turning over the last pages of the manuscript.

Suddenly she thrust back her chair.

"The sand-blind scene!" she said.

"Come—you've rehearsed it. I take *Lorette*—you *John Faversham*. This is O. P. No, you come down here." Hurriedly she dragged two chairs into position, and almost before he realized Sprague found himself rehearsing that scene for the hundredth time. But with what a difference! The actress threw herself into the part body and soul, and although she read the words, the grip of them, the vital understanding that is part of the born artiste, was there, and Sprague saw what he had written for the first time.

And Meg watched him from her corner, and knew that she was as much to him then as one of the flies buzzing at the windowpane. They belonged—these two. They spoke the same language—a foreign tongue to her; and they laughed with the secrecy of good breeding at her and her kind. "Laugh back," he had said; but how could she, and at what? These antics of theirs? Clearly not, for they would not notice her if she did; and of a sudden her whole semisavage little being was consumed with an unreasoning hate.

The sun had set before either of them noticed how late it was, and the actress flung herself into a chair with a gesture of mock dismay.

"Heavens!" she cried, staring at the clock, and laughed a rippling, well-trained laugh. "But it's been so good! I feel alive again."

She sighed contentedly, and reached for her gloves.

Sprague stood before her, frankly radiant.

"You really think——" he began.

"Yes," said Miss Holmes, "I really think."

She pulled on her gloves with a businesslike jerk.

"Although," she added, with a quick smile, "our audience apparently does not."

Sprague glanced hastily about him.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed. "When did she go?"

## CHAPTER VIII.

Throughout the days that followed, Meg still hated. She told herself so repeatedly. The only problem remaining was to decide whom she loathed the most.

At times it was the pyjama man, who had invaded her small world, turned it topsy-turvy, and was now preparing to leave it as jauntily as he had come. For it was all settled. He and the actress had been almost constantly together, and in a few days were sailing on the *Orontes* for London.

At others it was Miss Holmes, with her laughing eyes and refined egoism,

for with all her greatness she was still an actress. Then there was Frank Walker, the very thought of whom made her shudder. For some reason, complete as it was obscure, she saw him now in an entirely new light. Hitherto she had looked upon him as a sort of genial genius from whom anything might be expected, from chocolates and gold bangles to a miraculous termination of her father's woes, all simply dependent on her promise to become his wife. He had told her so in his own quaint way, and it had looked so delightfully convenient. Why, indeed, should she have any more objection to sitting at the head of his table than in his big red touring car? Meg was not vain, but she remembered how he had laughed and patted her hand, when, in all seriousness, she had suggested that the bargain was one-sided, he giving too much and she too little. But now a mist seemed to have lifted before her mental vision, and she saw him as he was—herself his wife—and shuddered.

Even Robert had come under the ban. One day he had scrambled through the hedge, as he often did, and found her pretending to read in the garden. He had thrust his cold, moist nose into her hand as it hung from the hammock, and she had rapped it smartly with her knuckles, to gather him in her arms the next instant and bury her face in his silky ears.

It was this incident, small in itself, that had first clearly brought home to Meg her state of mental chaos; it left her ashamed and thoroughly annoyed with herself. "Don't hate," he had said; "it's hardly ever worth while." It was not! And from that hour she had striven—how hard she alone knew—to prove the truth of the assertion by throwing herself into her work with an energy that demoralized the household. Never had the white house on the cliff's summit undergone such a rigorous upheaval. Mr. Bettington wandered from room to room, peevishly demanding the whereabouts of his slippers, his tobacco pouch, or some other triviality without which his world would cease to revolve on its axis, to

come at last upon his overzealous daughter, enveloped in an apron and a cloud of dust.

"They are the weirdest people," Miss Holmes had confided to Sprague shortly after the inception of this crusade against disorder. "They give one olives and game for two pounds a week, and spring-clean in midsummer. Thank Heaven, my workshop is detached!"

But the star boarder's "workshop," a comfortable, weather-boarded room separated from the side of the house by a stretch of rank greensward, and used in a more affluent past as servants' quarters, was not immune.

Here, on a cushion-strewn divan, Miss Holmes whiled away many pleasant hours with novel and play, attended to her correspondence, posed before a cheval glass, or subjected herself to the prescribed course of physical culture that had made her figure what it was—and Meg found dust everywhere.

It was while she was vigorously polishing the windowpanes and humming an entirely new tune of her own that her glance fell on "the work." It lay on the table in two untidy piles, one face downward, the other topped by a neatly typewritten page disfigured with copious corrections in ink.

The humming ceased abruptly, and for several seconds Meg leaned over it, deep in thought. Then she gave a queer little laugh, dusted carefully round it, and passed outside.

Despite all her efforts, the solution to her problem had forced itself upon her, and she knew that it was "the work"—nothing but "the work"—that she hated; hated as if it were a living thing.

In the evening she went down to the cove. Of late she had chosen this hour for her bath, for then, veiled in soft semidarkness, or shimmering under a gentle moon, the sea she loved held a mystery undreamed of in the glare of day.

One by one a crescent of tiny lights leaped into being round the distant curve of Manly beach, and the faint

strains of a band floated intermittently over the water, borne on a fitful breeze.

Meg sat motionless, her knees drawn to her chin, her gaze fastened unseeing on the stretch of shining sand just bared by the receding tide.

"This must be Tuesday," she murmured to the darkness; "Wednesday—Thursday—Friday—"

"That's just what I've been thinking," said Sprague, and flung himself on the sand at her side.

If Meg started, the movement was well hidden.

"Just what?" she queried.

"Wednesday — Thursday — Friday," mimicked Sprague. "We sail on Friday."

Meg laughed—a hard, taunting little laugh.

"Good gracious, you didn't suppose I was thinking of that?"

"I'm afraid I did."

"Then it may do you good to hear that I was totting up when the washing will come back; we haven't a clean tablecloth in the house."

"Washing! And on such a night!"

Sprague rolled over on the sand, the better to see her face.

"Where on earth have you been?" he demanded. "For the past week I've sampled the cove at every hour between five in the morning and six at night without running you to earth. This time inspiration prompted me—I stayed down here all day."

"With nothing to eat?"

"I brought sandwiches and a billy."

"And nothing to do?"

"There was the sea, and Robert, and a book. I wanted to see you," he ended abruptly.

"Why didn't you come to the house?"

Sprague tossed a pebble down the stretch of wet sand.

"I'm not sure that I know," he said deliberately, "unless it is that to me the white house is yours, the Haven mine, but the cove ours. Down here you can be *you*, and I can be *I*. I wanted us to be like that when we said good-by—that's all."

Meg's laugh jarred on her own ears.

"What a queer man you are!" she observed. "No wonder you can write stories and plays and things."

Sprague frowned into the darkness.

"Yes, it's your turn to laugh." He turned and faced her squarely. "Do you know," he said, with the air of one divulging a guilty secret, "that in spite of the stories and plays—and things—sometimes I don't want to go back there at all."

He nodded out to sea.

"Can you see what that means to me?" he went on. "It means that I have found something better than home, and nowhere should be like that. Everybody and everything that I ought to care about is back there, and yet I want to give it all the slip—it worries me a little."

"Don't let it," said Meg easily. "You're not going to give it all the slip, so why worry? Besides, you'll fall into place with a click, just like a dislocated arm, exactly two days after you land."

The fitful strains of the band had ceased, and the silence was unbroken save for the gentle hiss of water-washed sand.

Sprague changed the position of his legs, and drew a deep breath of warm night air.

"I suppose I shall," he sighed. "It's rather wonderful, isn't it? I was expecting all the ordinary reverses and a few new ones thrown in—flat refusals, polite refusals, delay, delay, delay; and here's the thing accomplished inside of a week. Miss Holmes is opening with it at the Olympic—do you mind digging something into my leg?"

Meg gingerly obeyed.

"Of course it's wonderful," she said. "It's fate—there!"

"Thanks." Sprague lapsed into silence.

"Is that all you waited down here all day to tell me?" said Meg presently. "Because, if so, I'm tremendously disappointed. I knew it already."

"No," said Sprague, "that's not all. I wanted to know if you'd accept Robert."

Meg turned at that. She knew what the offer must cost him.

"Do you mean it?" she demanded gravely.

"Of course I mean it."

"Then I'm not sure that I like you any more; I thought you were fond of Rags."

A second after the words were uttered she regretted them. Sprague sat quite still, looking out to sea.

"I'm so fond of him," he said slowly, for once omitting to correct the old-time error, "that I don't want to see him suffer. Robert is a child of the open air and freedom; in London he would pine away. I shall be frightfully busy; besides, he would have to go through three months' quarantine at Southampton. I've heard something about that quarantine, and—I want you to have him; will you?"

"Yes," said Meg, "I'll have him."

"Thanks."

There followed a long silence, during which Sprague felt a sudden and wild desire to snatch this chilly little mortal into his arms and kiss her into warmth. It was a novel sensation, experienced once—and only once—in his life before—at the age of seventeen. At that moment even "the work" faded into insignificance, a specter, grim and unalluring. He moved nearer to her in the sand, drawn by an irresistible impulse, and saw that she trembled.

"Are you cold?" he queried huskily.

"No," she answered.

"Then why are you trembling?"

She turned to him, and their eyes met. He had his answer. The miracle stole over him like an opiate, seducing every sense. She leaned toward him, and for a breathless instant her lips brushed his—lightly as the wings of a moth; the next a dog's bark rang sharply on the silence, the spell was broken, and the world surged back on Sprague in a swift and overwhelming torrent of remorse.

He rose to his feet, and stood awkwardly in the sand.

"Good-by," he said.

She looked up at him with a little white smile.

"Good-by."

"And don't see us off," he said, with an absurd snigger.

"If you'd rather not."

"I would. I hate it—grinning inanely at one another from a crowd across three feet of greasy water for perhaps an hour—please don't!"

"I promise."

"You'll write?"

"Perhaps."

For a moment he stood looking down on her. Something in her voice awed him; then he turned abruptly and strode up the beach toward the cliff path.

## CHAPTER IX.

Long after he had gone Meg sat in the sand, still staring out to sea; and when at last she rose and toiled slowly up the cliff track her movements were those of one in a trance.

In her own room, she knelt at the open window, outwardly engrossed in the beams of a newly risen moon that filtered through the avenue trees and danced on the unkempt lawn.

The house was deathly still. Her father had been out all day, and had not yet returned. The actress was attending a farewell dinner at Sydney's best restaurant, tendered her by the favored few to whom she had disclosed her identity.

Meg was alone, and for the first time in her life knew what that meant—to stand, as it were, a detached spectator, watching one's world and everything it held crumble and fade. The pyjama man was going—in another two days he would be gone—with a laugh even as he had come. The thought had a quickening influence; she glanced swiftly about her, as if seeking a tangible weapon of revenge, and as if by a miracle she found one.

A mere thread of yellow light it was, cast from the workshop window, and feebly vying with a brilliant moon that now rode clear of the avenue trees. *The actress had left her lamp burning.*

"Laugh back," he had said. For a moment Meg knelt, staring at the yel-

low glow; then of a sudden she threw back her head and obeyed.

The shrillness of it startled her, and she scrambled to her feet. The moonlight flooded the room, and she caught a sudden glimpse of her own reflection in a mirror by the window. A tousled, diabolical little witch in a boy's bathing suit and a blue kimono looked back at her from the glass. Again she laughed—softly, defiantly, and tossed the hair from about her face. Down the dark stairs she sped, and out into the garden.

At the workshop window she paused. The lamp was there—alight, on the table by the window—but “the work” was gone.

The blood ebbed from her face, leaving it pale as the moonlight about her; then, as her feverish glance discovered the familiar manuscript on a bookshelf behind the door, an indescribable little sound—half sigh, half hiss—escaped her, and, leaning through the window, she upset the lamp with a steady hand.

Simultaneously with the crash of glass a tongue of flame quivered across the table and dripped to the floor.

The rest Meg watched from the veranda steps, sitting huddled with wide eyes and fluttering breath, like some malicious elf awed by the mischief it has wrought.

If she could have helped in the work of demolition she would have done so at that moment with an unholy joy; but she could do no more—only sit and watch and gloat; and with inaction coherent thought filtered slowly back to her brain.

What—exactly *what*—had she done? Then quite suddenly, even as one side of the flimsy building burst into flames, she saw herself as she was, and her head fell forward on her arms.

When she lifted it, the woman looked out of Meg's eyes. She rose without haste, and approached the burning building, but a gust of fire-laden wind drove her back. Again and again she tried, and was beaten back. Then something more than the woman took possession of her. She shook back the singed masses of her hair as she did

when a Pacific roller gave her undue trouble in the handling, and literally hurled herself at the door. It gave under the impact, and she scrambled to her feet, groping blindly above her head with blistered hands. At last something crisp met her touch. She seized it, and, staggering into the open, fell face downward in the grass.

So they found her—those attracted by the glare—and as they lifted her a bundle of papers, curled and charred at the corners, fluttered from her arms.

## CHAPTER X.

“The man fascinates me,” said Miss Holmes. “What is he?”

“I don't know,” Sprague answered, under cover of a magazine, “except that he's a Western American, and the mystery of the smoking room.”

“Have you spoken to him?”

“No; no one seems to want to break the ice, and he shows pretty clearly he doesn't.”

“Then how do you know he's a Western American?”

“Look at his clothes—or, rather, his armor. See the jacket, padded inches deep, and reaching to the knee; the peg-top trousers, and bulgent-toed boots ready made to receive his pet bunion? That's the last shriek of fashion anywhere west of Chicago.”

“Really?”

“Oh, there are funnier things than that in America. I once saw a man in Seattle with a gold tooth, and a diamond set in the middle of it. For the rest he was like our friend yonder, except for his tie—that was a really ingenious combination of bow and sailor's knot—and his shoes, which were exactly like red-hot flatirons studded with overgrown drawing pins—”

But Miss Holmes was still surreptitiously studying the subject of their conversation over the top of a novel.

“What a jaw!” she murmured admiringly. “Anything would be possible to a man with a jaw like that. And look at his hands—quickly, while he folds up his chair—they're like a brick-layer's.”



Sprague looked up in time to see a broad back disappear into the smoking room.

"Miner," was his laconic verdict.

From the foregoing it will be fairly apparent that he and the actress were seated on the promenade deck of the *Orontes*. After three weeks—sometimes before—shipboard amenities are apt to thin down to gossip; but they had been a very pleasant three weeks of blue seas, bluer skies, and tempering trades, and now a cool crossing of the line was having such a benignant influence on the captain that he had given his consent to the old equatorial custom of holding Neptune's court.

The first intimation Sprague had of this was a subdued scream from Miss Holmes, and the startling vision of a "policeman" in full regalia. The man stood before them, resplendent in burned cork and tow, holding a collection box in one hand and a gigantic bludgeon in the other, hugely enjoying his lawful trespass on the sacred saloon deck.

"Exemption tickets five shillings," he announced, with a grin; and Sprague bought two with an alacrity born of experience.

"It's sheer funk," he admitted, while the "policeman" repeated his intimidations on a nervous little gentleman in glasses. "It may be funny from the fo'e's'le point of view, but from the victim's it's downright bullying."

Miss Holmes looked vaguely apprehensive.

"I don't seem to remember anything of the sort coming out," she observed.

"No; they don't have it on the P. & O., and it's dying out on most of the other lines. But come along if you want to be in at the kill."

Below them on the fore'ard hatch the "court" stood, awaiting Father Neptune, who at last made a sedate entry over the ship's rail, to the accompaniment of a badly played bugle. His flowing beard of rope ends reached to his knees; his trident bore a sorry-looking herring impaled on its points; and the binoculars with which he looked about him were composed of two beer

bottles spliced side by side. But he made an impressive figure, and when his murderous-looking courtiers—powerful fo'e's'le hands, blackened from head to foot, and decorated with brightly dyed tufts of tow—rallied about him, more than one passenger was seen drifting quietly toward his cabin.

The "police" were a zealous force, and while the procession filed toward a tank they hustled the "débutants" like sheep onto the lower deck.

The first to be presented was a lanky youth from the steerage, who showed an abject readiness to submit to anything; but his meekness availed him nothing; he was forcibly seized and carried to the hatchway, where he was hoisted onto a form opposite Neptune's "throne." His shirt was opened, and his chest and face thoroughly plastered with an evil-looking, black concoction which was as thoroughly removed by the "doctor" with a gigantic wooden razor. Then Neptune, bawling at him through a megaphone, demanded how he liked entering his new domain, and when he opened his mouth to answer, the brush with which he had been lathered was thrust into it, the form was tipped up, and he fell headforemost into the tank. The "devils" presiding over this department then proceeded to give him the prescribed ducking, and he finally crawled from their hands like a half-drowned kitten.

"Good Lord!" said Sprague. "Our friend of the lantern jaw is going through with it."

"I should somehow think he would," replied Miss Holmes thoughtfully.

He stood in line with the rest, arrayed in peg-top ducks and a tennis shirt, watching the proceedings without a flicker of a smile; and when it came to his turn for presentation he suffered every indignity with a stoicism that robbed it of half its effect.

Sprague was about to vote the entertainment tame, when things took quite an unexpected turn. Once in the tank, the etiquette of Neptune's court allows the victim to fend for himself, and of this largess the American proceeded to take full advantage. Bracing himself

in a corner, he stood firm as adamant, resisting every effort to get him under the water. With his soaking shirt clinging to his body, it was at once apparent that the man was possessed of tremendous strength, the muscles of his arms and shoulders playing under the sodden linen like strands of steel, while "devil" after "devil" went in to defeat.

Two he summarily dealt with by knocking their heads together and thrusting them out onto the deck amid terrific applause. A third dived for his legs, and received a submarine kick in the face for his trouble. But the fourth approached the matter warily; making a sudden dive for the hose that kept the tank supplied with water, he dragged it to the surface, and kept a three-hundred-gallon-a-minute jet centered on the American's head until he dived in turn and dragged his assailant, hose and all, below the surface.

For a moment proceedings came to a standstill, and all eyes—from those of the laughing captain on the bridge to those of a rather discomforted Neptune—were centered on the tank, where troubled waters told of the struggle going on below the surface.

When at last the combatants arose, the American climbed leisurely from the tank and picked a dripping way through the cheering crowd to his cabin.

"Wasn't he splendid?" Miss Holmes was clapping her hands like a school-girl at a hockey match.

"I should like to meet that man," said Sprague.

And that night he did.

Strolling aft in company with a cigar, he came upon the hero of the afternoon leaning over the ship's rail, watching the phosphorescent waters swirling past the great ship's sides. Sprague had half turned to leave him to the solitude he sought when he looked up, and their eyes met. It was almost impossible to avoid speech.

"I congratulate you on your conquest of the 'devils,'" said Sprague.

For a moment the other regarded him with a frankly resentful stare;

then his mouth relaxed into a slow smile that imbued his ascetic features with an unlooked-for warmth.

"Thanks," he said; "they seemed to be looking for horseplay, so I thought I'd give it to them."

Such was the manner of Sprague's meeting with Nathaniel Stone, a manner surely as fantastic, in the light of after events, as this remarkable small world could furnish.

From that day the two men were almost inseparable. Theirs was one of those friendships, truly mystifying to the outsider, that seem to thrive on dissimilarity of taste and ideals; to find incentive in the clash of widely divergent personalities. To Sprague—inclined to be trivial, even frivolous—there was the fascination of unplumbed depths in Nathaniel Stone; and to the American, Sprague was as a drink of sparkling water to a thirsty soul.

Together they accomplished the morning constitutional on the promenade deck, smoked the postprandial cigar of contentment and companionship at the ship's rail, explored the cinnamon gardens of Colombo and the Arab quarters at Port Said; and each day revealed to Sprague fresh traits in the other's extraordinary personality, for extraordinary it proved to be. He had no sense of humor, and his face betrayed it, its very contour in repose bespeaking a natural gravity, the acceptance of life as a serious business. His conversation, though showing a keen observance of men and things, was never illumined by the faintest glimmering of levity; a joke to him was a sad and sorry affair, and on the few occasions when Sprague launched one for his benefit he accorded him a solemn, undivided attention that went farther to quash the misguided effort than would any failure to comprehend—he saw them, saw them all, and pitied the joker.

Sprague instinctively felt that here was a man with a purpose, a man who had taken life in his two hands and wrestled with it, that there was something behind him that kept him wrestling still; but many days were to pass

before he learned what that something was.

## CHAPTER XI.

It was the last night aboard the *Orontes*, and an air of subdued excitement pervaded the great ship. The red-carpeted corridors were thronged with a hurrying, chattering stream of passengers, and the open doors of staterooms revealed a chaos of struggling humanity, clothes, and cabin trunks.

As Sprague emerged from the smoking room, muffled to the ears in a heavy topcoat, he half turned and glanced down at the deck behind him. The movement was hardly noticeable, yet it did not escape Stone.

"You've done that so often," he said, with his slow smile and characteristic drawl, "that you must forgive me asking the reason."

Sprague answered him with a momentary look of incomprehension, then gave a short laugh of annoyance.

"Habit, I suppose," he said. "I left the best pal I ever had back there in the sunshine, but I keep forgetting and looking for him at my heels."

"A dog?"

"Yes—a black cocker spaniel. Shall we walk?"

A biting wind was blowing from the east, and for a while the two men strode briskly and in silence. Sprague's hands were thrust deeply into his pockets, his head bent forward, and his mouth set firm.

"I feel as silly as a schoolgirl before her first dance," he said presently. "I'm right on the edge of things, Stone; shall I fall into the charmed circle of success or outside it?"

"I shouldn't bother," Stone advised. "It's on the lap of the gods—and Miss Holmes. Besides, does it matter?"

"Matter!" Sprague looked round at his companion with a perplexed frown. "Good Lord, man, look what it means!"

"What does it mean?"

"To me the success of 'Lorette' means everything—everything I hold to be worth while."

"And what is that?"

"The realization of my dreams, the accomplishment of my destiny."

The American's pale-blue eyes wandered off over the ship's rail.

"Lucky man!" he drawled.

"Why?"

"To have such a cheap destiny."

"You think it cheap?"

"I do. To realize a dream is more often to shatter it; and, supposing your 'Lorette' is a success, well, what then?"

"I can go on——"

"And on, and on—and what then?"

"Then—well—what a rum un you are, Stone! That's life, isn't it?"

"I wish I could think so," said the American. "Mind, I'm not saying that a man's work isn't part of his life, and an important part—if we don't work, most of us pretend that we do, which proves its necessity—but to say that it is life——" He shook his head slowly.

Something in the man's quiet assurance jarred on Sprague.

"Perhaps you don't have to work?" he suggested, with a touch of asperity.

For answer, Stone held out his hands.

"Those," he said, indicating their gnarled palms and shapeless fingers, "are the result of gripping a cant hook in a Cascade lumbering camp six days out of seven for three years."

"Then your definition of life is the accumulation of money by means of manual labor?"

Stone smiled faintly.

"Oh, dear, no; I didn't do it for money; I have what we call in America 'slathers' of it, and that is what I'm trying to show you—that a man's work is not his life, but what he works *for*. In your case, we have thinned the incentive down to 'going on and going on,' which seems to me so aimless that I can't for the life of me see why you should get into a fever over the possible success or failure of 'Lorette.'"

"Then, in Heaven's name, what do you work for?"

The American paused in the shelter of a ventilator to light a fresh cigar.

"You probably wouldn't understand," he said, after drawing it into a healthy glow. "I hope you don't mind me saying it, but I'm almost sure you wouldn't understand."

Sprague was annoyed in spite of himself. *He* not understand! It was Stone who never understood; who could hope to understand anything without a sense of humor?

"Very possibly not," he admitted tartly.

Again the exasperating smile twitched the other's lips.

"And don't get annoyed about it; there's no need. I said that because I once told it all to another man—the only man I ever did tell it to—"

"And he didn't understand?"

"He laughed."

"Then he ought to have been shot," said Sprague.

"You haven't heard it yet; perhaps you'll laugh, too," Stone suggested. "Just do as you like. I'm going to tell you, anyway. Let's sit down; this wind is smoking my cigar for me."

They found two chairs, and dragged them into the lee of the smoking room. Stone crossed one bony knee over the other, and fixed his gaze on a swaying shroud.

"The reason that I worked—worked hard with my hands—was that I might occupy my day, and get thoroughly, physically tired and ready for sleep at its end. I wanted oblivion, and that was the only way I could get it. I had tried the others. I was thought promising by the lights of the law at one time; at another I looked like making no end of money that I didn't want in real estate; yet something I was trying to forget kept obtruding itself between me and my work. This memory and my work fought for mastery in my mind, and the memory was always victorious in the end. I rushed blindly into every kind of sport in the endeavor to thrust it from me; but it still followed me. I toured the world, and it was this that finally brought me to a decision. Those lonely voyages offered less resistance to the thing I was trying to forget than anything I had tried pre-

viously, and I determined that my only hope was a hard, routine day of manual labor, in which I should become a machine, a mechanical contrivance for doing some crude work, work that I could do day in, day out, and lose myself in the rhythm of doing it, until I became conscious of bodily fatigue and could rest by sleeping, thus forcing my brain to rest, too. And so I got work at a lumbering camp in the Cascade Mountains. I had to wait until men loaded my wagon in the bush with logs, drive them to the mill skidways, roll them off with a cant hook, and return to the bush. I found myself counting the trees that lined the trail. Between the skidway at the mill and the skidway in the bush there were exactly one thousand six hundred and forty-two on the right side, and twenty less on the left. I made eight trips in the day; my nigh horse took usually about eight hundred steps to make the trip, and my off horse seven hundred and forty or fifty. So I managed to occupy my mind all day and lose it in tired sleep at night. I have been doing that for three years, and by comparing my state of mind now with what I remember it to have been three years ago I feel I have made headway."

He ended abruptly, and, with a dexterous movement of the tongue, conveyed his cigar to the opposite corner of his mouth.

"And this memory—" Sprague began, and checked himself.

"I said I was going to tell you all," Stone continued doggedly. "I was just coming to that; this is where the other man laughed."

He unfastened the center stud of his shirt front, and detached a small gold locket from a slender chain encircling his neck.

"That is what I was trying to forget," he said.

Sprague looked down into the face of a very commonplace woman of about twenty. The hair was dark and parted in the middle with severe simplicity; the features were undeniably handsome in a coarse, voluptuous way that suggested the Jewess; the eyes

were, of course, expressionless, the picture being a photograph. He studied it carefully for a few seconds, and then returned it.

"You see," said Stone, attaching the locket to the chain, and speaking in a deliberate monotone, "we were engaged to be married. I bought fruit land in California, and built the home, and when I went back East to fetch her she had changed her mind—that's all."

After a brief pause he looked up at Sprague almost appealingly.

"You're not laughing?" he said, without a trace of cynicism.

Sprague was not; the thing annoyed him to such an extent that he resolved to speak.

"I see nothing to laugh at," he admitted. "But tell me—you never had much to do with women?"

"She was the only woman I ever really knew, or cared to know."

"And you have never seen her since—not for five years altogether?"

"No."

"And because she jilted you you went to the Cascades and buried yourself—you thought it the best way to forget?"

"It is the only way. This trip was an attempt at a holiday, but it has proved for the second time that I can't stop work. I shall take the first boat back."

"I still see nothing to laugh at," said Sprague; "but I see a great deal to exasperate the ordinary mortal."

"I knew you wouldn't understand," said Stone wearily. "I must be different somehow—I've often thought it. I don't want to whine, and God knows I say this out of no conceit, but I must be a man in a thousand. The other nine hundred and ninety-nine would look upon it as a misfortune—perhaps it is—but I can't—I can't love and ride away. Where I loved once I shall always love; she is a part of me, though belonging to another. I, you see, was not part of her; there is some gigantic mistake somewhere. She was something ethereal to me; she will always be that—whatever happens."

"Man's love is the same the world

over," Sprague blurted brutally. "To see a man like you buried in a hole like that, going through day after day what you went through, for the sake of a dream, a chimera, it—it—"

"Yes, I know," said Stone.

"And if you call it understanding," Sprague went on hotly, "understanding to sanction suicide and premature burial, then I'm sorry, but I certainly don't understand. You carry that picture round your neck and in your mind's eye; you see her always as she appeared to you in the old days; you worship her image—do you understand?—not her, but her memory. If you could see her now—why, she has probably developed the temper of a fiend; she has grown fat and coarse; she has three children; she may have had some disease that has disfigured her for life—smallpox—anything. You loved her, not her character; she was too young to have one when you knew her. Oh, wake up, man! There are lots of good things left in life if you only get out and look for them."

Stone gazed fixedly into the darkness.

"Please don't say any more," he said. "It won't do any good, and I don't like to hear it; it's worse than the laugh."

"Look here, Stone," said Sprague firmly, "you're going to stay with me in London. We're going to take rooms that I know of in the Gray's Inn Road—not a very salubrious neighborhood for a man with slathers of money, but cheap and central for me. You'll come to the rehearsals and take an interest in 'Lorette' in spite of yourself. You'll do the sights, and spend meditative evenings over them in a good armchair by a roaring fire; and you'll see how many days it takes to drown this dream of yours."

Stone shook his head slowly, but deliberately.

"It's good of you," he said, "but you—"

"Then that's settled. We dock about ten to-morrow. I must go and pack."

But the American still sat in the deck chair, a huddled, ungainly figure in the darkness.

## CHAPTER XII.

For three weeks Sprague was lost in a whirl of activities that rendered him impervious to the worst a London February could do.

A dank, yellow fog might wrap the already unlovely Gray's Inn Road in a still more unlovely mantle, obliterating the lights from fish and fried-sausage shop windows before they had struggled six yards; a biting, rain-laden wind might sweep the gloomy thoroughfare from end to end, filling the gutters with a muddy torrent, and searching for the very marrow of the helpless pedestrian; yet Sprague walked in the sunshine of impending accomplishment; he was "on the edge of things"; and for him the London that he loved had never been more alluring.

There were, of course, the inevitable moments of doubt, ghastly hiatuses in his usually optimistic outlook, when it seemed inconceivable that "Lorette" could interest, much less move, the drab, unimaginative-looking multitudes he passed in the streets; but at such times Miss Holmes was a never-failing bulwark of encouragement.

"My dear man," she would say, "those are not the people we cater for. Wait till you see a first-night audience at the Olympic, and you'll understand."

Stone, too, with his almost uncanny imperturbability, was something of a comfort. He took a sort of tolerant interest in the rehearsals, attending them in much the same spirit as a mother would accompany her son to a football match; but he was always there, and always the same, conveying to Sprague a subtle air of companionship devoid of those mystifying moods that we so often notice in others and so seldom in ourselves.

One afternoon, on his way to the theater, Sprague met his father in the Strand, and for the first time it occurred to him that he had failed to pay his duty call at the Metropole.

Father and son shook hands without emotion; these rare and uninspiring meetings had occurred before. Mr. Sprague was a sleek, elderly gentleman

with a weakness for golf and Harris tweeds in the summer, and Piccadilly and a malacca cane in the winter.

"You don't look a day older, sir," his son observed.

Mr. Sprague beamed, and led the way into Short's.

"I don't feel it, my boy," he replied. "What brought you back?"

"The *Orontes*, about three weeks ago."

"But what have you been doing?"

"Writing a play."

Mr. Sprague grunted, and sipped his sherry.

"Millicent Waring is engaged to young Duprez," he announced irrelevantly.

"Thank God!" said Sprague.

His father's ruddy complexion took on a slightly deeper hue.

"John," he said, "you annoy me intensely."

The younger man slowly consumed a biscuit.

"I know," he answered; "I'm sorry, but it's simple enough to avoid one another, isn't it?"

"Are you content to go drifting on in this aimless way all your life?"

"I prefer it to marrying money. Besides, I don't look upon it as aimless. My play is being produced at the Olympic to-morrow night."

If this announcement was intended to impress, it signally failed in its object.

"Play—pshaw!" snapped Mr. Sprague. "What'll you be at next? And what's to happen to the manor? You know how things stood before you left last time; well, to put it mildly, they're no better."

"My dear father, is that my fault?"

"Yes; you should have married Millicent; you owed it to the manor, to me, to yourself."

Sprague smiled whimsically.

"If I owed it to myself," he said slowly, "I'm glad I didn't foreclose. I owe you and the manor nothing. After paying for my education, the mater left me enough to crawl on, as you know; and I have had to crawl most of my life; now that I mean to fly, you can



hardly blame me for choosing my own wings, can you?"

Mr. Sprague tugged thoughtfully at a becoming gray mustache.

"By wings I suppose you mean this play of yours?" he suggested.

"Yes."

"I asked because you may have to test their strength pretty severely," Mr. Sprague twisted his wineglass by its stem, while his son reflected that he had seldom seen him so pensive.

"I mean, you don't expect me to—er—leave you anything?"

"Not a stiver," said Sprague cheerfully.

"And—er—you're not relying on your annuity indefinitely?"

"To tell you the truth, I hadn't thought about it; but, yes, I understood the mater left me two hundred and fifty a year for life."

"She did—of course, dependent on the capital remaining intact; but I see you haven't yet heard from Parker & Dods."

"I have been six weeks at sea."

"Of course that accounts for it. I hope you won't be greatly disappointed, but—"

The rest Sprague heard intermittently through a kind of mental haze. The truth had flashed in on him with a suddenness that was rather blinding, and there was really no need to listen to the cool phrases of the well-dressed elderly gentleman across the table—"unavoidable"—"new taxes"—"mortgaged to the hilt"—to know that he was practically penniless.

For a moment white-hot anger burned in his throat, but he quenched it with a laugh, realizing its impotence against a nature such as his father's.

"You take it well, John," observed that gentleman, in tones of admiration; "it's the way of the Spragues—but I hardly expected you to laugh."

"It's so amusing," said Sprague. He chuckled and crushed a biscuit between finger and thumb. "You steal my money, and then expect me to condole with you because you've spent it all. Can't you see the humor of it?"

Apparently Mr. Sprague could not.

He even attempted an air of offended dignity until he read the futility of it in his son's face.

"We're in the same boat, John," he said; then, in a conciliatory undertone: "You must see now why I was so anxious over the Millicent Waring affair; there are others, and we must make the most of our opportunities while we have appearances to back us up."

"Then I'll leave them in your hands, sir," said Sprague, with ghastly cheerfulness. "A man is as old as he looks, you know, and with your charm of manner and—yes, we can say appearance—you should have no difficulty. Personally I'd get out and work with my hands first."

He had risen, and was reaching for his gloves when it occurred to him that something about the words he had just uttered sounded vaguely familiar.

"Travel seems to have rather altered your views," his father observed, with a slight elevation of the eyebrows—and the delicate thread of memory was broken.

"It has," said Sprague. "Good-by." As he passed out into the hurrying Strand, his father noticed that he glanced down at the floor behind him.

"John is certainly touched," he mused, and sighed as he drew an engagement book from his waistcoat pocket.

Sprague hurried on to the theater in the mixed company of his thoughts. The chance meeting with his father had simply shown him that he could no longer be a dabbler, dipping into work when and where he pleased. It must be real work now, a hard, ceaseless grind for his daily bread. He laughed at the thought that a paltry two hundred and fifty a year could so completely alter the aspect of things. But there was the play—always the play—and that "Lorette" meant more than ever to him now was a thought that only served to stimulate its author.

The Olympic is a tiny theater—a faded theater some people called it—situated off the Strand. Externally, with its white portico, marble steps, and highly varnished swinging doors, it lends a re-

lieving splash of color to an otherwise drab and featureless row of typical London offices. Internally, it is as attractive as the whim of a tasteful woman can make it. Before passing down the narrow alley leading to the stage door Sprague looked about him, marveling, not for the first time, at the powers of the magician who could line that street with waiting carriages and throng the unpretentious foyer with all the brilliance of a West End theater crowd.

From the wings he could see her seated in a Louis Quinze chair, carrying on an animated dialogue with a blasé-looking gentleman in a frock coat. This was Paul Howard, known to theater-going London as "Nina Holmes' leading man" and "a dear."

The rehearsal was going well, as far as Sprague could see, but they had so disfigured his poor "Lorette" that he had long since abandoned protest, and resigned himself to the knowledge that at rehearsals no one is in less request than the author of the piece.

Presently a minor character entered, and in some way inexplicable to Sprague raised the ire of a stout little man who sat in the third row of the stalls, apparently asleep. He sprang from the shadows of the auditorium like an overdeveloped spook.

"No, no, no!" he roared; and the minor character quailed, while that martinet of stage managers, William Saunderson, dashed onto the stage and assumed an attitude utterly preposterous for his size and figure. "So—don't you see? So!"

And William Saunderson was right; Sprague could see the subtle difference when the girl, with tears in her eyes, did as she was bid.

During a wait Sprague caught a weary smile from Nina Holmes, and went over to her side.

"You're tired," he said.

"Dog," replied the actress. "But it goes well, don't you think?"

"I'm no judge of the revised version," he answered, smiling; "but what suits Saunderson ought to suit me."

Miss Holmes threw up her hands after a manner of her own.

"What do you think he called the Upland woman to-day?"

"Haven't the faintest."

The actress whispered into Sprague's ear, and he stiffened perceptibly.

"Some one ought to murder the little beast," he said.

"If they did, we should lose the best stage manager in London. No, no, my gallant Queenscliff playwright, for such slings and arrows of outrageous stage managers are we actresses fitted with the beauty of Venus, the grace of Diana, and the hide of a rhinoceros. But, talking of Queenscliff, look what I received this morning."

She drew a newspaper clipping from her chatelaine bag, and Sprague read with the aid of a bunch light:

MARRIED.—At St. Michael's Church, Manly, on January 30th, Margaret, only daughter of Samuel Bettington, The White House, Queenscliff, to Frank J. Walker, of Manly.

Something rushed over his face and was gone so swiftly that even Nina Holmes failed to catch its meaning.

"Sacrilege!" he muttered, returning her the cutting. "Who sent it to you?"

But he failed to hear the answer. His eyes were on the stage, but he saw nothing of the play in progress. The first thing of which he was conscious was the word "cure" uttered by Miss Holmes as she hurried back to her part, and the bite of the wind that met him in the street.

It was the strangest thing! He could have sworn the girl had never entered his thoughts for the past two months; yet now he saw her as clearly as if in the flesh—married to Walker!

Stone's silent companionship was a comfort that evening. He had spent three consecutive days at the British Museum, a departure that Sprague had welcomed as the first sign of awakening interest in things practical; and now, arrayed in a lurid dressing gown, sat before a roaring fire, reading of the wonders he had seen.

For a long time Sprague sat, chin in hand, staring into the grate; the leaping flames conjured many pictures

—a sunny beach, a blue kimono, and a laughing, boyish face—a black, ragged-coated dog of doubtful origin—and again the beach, but wrapped in a soft semidarkness—and again the boyish face, but upturned to his, with a smile that he would never quite forget.

He dispelled the memory with an effort, and fell to studying his companion's rugged profile against the green shade of the reading lamp. The little picture, framed by the surrounding darkness, was almost symbolical—strength in repose. "I must be different somehow, a man in a thousand. The other nine hundred and ninety-nine would look upon it as a misfortune—perhaps it is—but I can't—I *can't love and ride away*." Was it possible that Stone was wrong—that there were others in that nine hundred and ninety-nine—like that? Was it possible—

Stone closed the book and turned in his chair.

"How goes 'Lorette'?" he asked.

Sprague was savagely poking the fire.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Two days later, at a quarter past ten in the morning, to be exact, Sprague half opened his eyes on a pink mist slightly tinged with yellow.

At first this rather surprising color scheme had a soothing effect, and he lay quite still, under the drowsy impression that he was watching a sunset over Sydney Heads. Presently, however, this phenomenon presenting itself to his drowsy intelligence as a physical impossibility from the Gray's Inn Road, he opened his eyes a little wider, and was confronted at close range with a segment of the bedroom wall paper in all its hideousness. Of course, that was intended to represent a yellow basket overflowing with pink roses; and this—this was the morning after the first night of "Lorette."

What a wonderful performance it had been! He could still see the narrow backwater of the Strand as it had been the night before, and as he had tried to picture it a hundred times—

imbued with scintillating life; the toy-like auditorium, with its sea of dim, white faces all turned in the same direction—toward *Lorette*—his *Lorette*—and all held captive by her charm. He recalled the face of a cabinet minister in a box as he turned to his wife at the fall of the second curtain; it told him far plainer than words that "Lorette" was good, and his blood surged again at the thought.

To be sure, the applause had hardly<sup>®</sup> been thunderous, but the elimination of the pit and the gallery accounted for that; ladies could hardly be expected to burst guinea gloves; and gentlemen—well, the London gentleman is seldom demonstrative. Also, there had been no call for author; but this had been nothing more than a genuine relief to Sprague. *Lorette*—his *Lorette*—had appeared twice after the first two acts, and three times after the last, to bow her acknowledgments; and what more could be expected or desired? Then the critics— With a bound, Sprague was out of bed and into the tiny sitting room.

Stone was seated before the fire, reading the newspaper. A comprehensive cigar was securely wedged in the corner of his mouth, and his long legs, culminating in their ungainly feet, dangled like overweighted pendulums from the arm of the chair.

Sprague laughed. He advanced on Stone, executing a hornpipe like a maniac, and laughed still louder when the American gazed up at him without a semblance of a smile. He slapped him on the back like a fool, and laughed again at his discomfiture. The world—even the Gray's Inn Road—was an intensely amusing place that morning. "Stone," he said, assuming a Napoleonic attitude on the hearthrug, "I have arrived!"

The American regarded him fixedly for a few seconds, and then smiled; but he was not amused; it was the same smile of compassion that Sprague had come to know so well that accompanied the extension of a work-worn hand.

"I'm glad," he said; "very glad."

"What do they say?" Sprague

snatched up the paper, and, turning to the notices, read aloud:

"After an interval of nearly six months, the Olympic opened its doors last night to the legion of Miss Nina Holmes' admirers; and if any proof of that charming actress-manager's popularity were needed, last night's performance unquestionably supplied it. Her welcome, after so long an absence from the notoriously fickle theatergoing public, was as warmly spontaneous as a particularly brilliant audience could make it—"

Sprague's eye drifted down the column, impatient to catch some mention of "Lorette," and near the bottom, con-signed to the last paragraph, he found it:

"The play, 'Lorette,' described as a drama in three acts, by still another of those 'unknowns' whom Miss Holmes delights to lift from obscurity, proved a suitable vehicle for her versatile talent—"

Sprague tossed the paper impatiently aside, and picked up another.

"Suitable vehicle!" he muttered.

Stone leaned forward and flicked his cigar ash into the fire.

Sprague continued:

"Miss Holmes is with us again, and not content with past achievements in the realm of theatrical experiment—the consistent production of plays with nothing more than their title to recommend them to 'first-night' audiences—she now returns, invigorated by a six months' rest, to essay the apparently impossible. More than one London manager has attempted to dispense with the cheaper parts of his theater, and has ultimately bowed his acknowledgment of defeat to the man in the street; yet last night the Olympic took up the cudgels and staked its all on box, stall, and dress circle. It is a daring innovation, but Miss Holmes is a daring woman, and it remains to be seen whether the brilliant audience of last night . . . The name part of 'Lorette' was obviously written for Miss Holmes, and suits her special endowments as an emotional actress to a marked degree . . . Her delicate handling of the trying scene in Act III. was particularly fine—"

Sprague muttered something unintelligible, and tossed the paper into an empty chair.

"What a blessing it is that it doesn't make a hap'orth of difference what they say—or, rather, don't say," he observed.

"It seems to me," said Stone between meditative puffs at his cigar, "that things are much the same here as across

the 'pond.' It's the actor whom the people roll up to see, not the play. But—I shouldn't worry if I were you."

"I'm not." Sprague stood with a pyjamaed elbow on the mantelpiece and looked into the fire. "And it rather surprises me that I'm not. It ought to worry me considerably, one way and another. I discovered the day before yesterday that I haven't a stiver in the world; so you see what 'Lorette' ought to mean to me now, quite apart from that 'cheap destiny' of mine."

Stone looked up at him.

"Good heavens!" he drawled. "Do you mean to say you'll have to subsist on 'Lorette'?"

"Yes—until I have written something else. But you may remember I intended to 'go on and on' in any case, so that part of the program remains unaltered. You don't think the prospect particularly cheerful?"

"How much did you get for that play?"

"A hundred down, and an agreement for royalties on every performance over forty."

"Have you sold the American rights?"

"No. Do you think there's a chance?"

Stone threw his cigar butt into the fender, and slowly drew his elongated legs into a more natural attitude.

"I'll give you two hundred down, and royalties on the English basis, for them," he said.

For a moment Sprague looked down at the sprawling figure in the deep arm-chair; then he gave a short laugh.

"I'm not down to charity yet," he said. "When I am, I won't forget you."

The color slowly mounted to Stone's face.

"Charity be hanged!" he said. "The insufferable airs of you Englishmen!"

"Well, what in thunder can you want with my play?"

"I'll tell you that when the bargain's closed."

"From lumberjack to play promoter!" Sprague quoted.

"You must remember," Stone sug-

gested mildly, "that I wasn't always a lumberjack."

"It's good of you," said Sprague more gravely, "but I can see through it, old man." He turned and pressed the bell button beside the fireplace, then stood at the window looking down into the busy street.

With the arrival of breakfast his spirits regained their normal level.

"Personally," he announced, attacking a thick slice of underdone bacon, "I look upon 'Lorette' as a howling success until I hear to the contrary; and to-night we celebrate, Stone. Nothing short of a music hall and supper at the Savoy. Oh, it's not a bit of use you wagging your head like that."

And it was not.

That evening the two men stood watching the ballet from the promenade at the Empire. Sprague watched the American's face closely, for it still interested him to note the slow stages by which Stone was being coaxed back to a normal outlook on life, and his face showed nothing but undisguised boredom.

At the end of the item he turned.

"There are worse lives than the lumberjack's," he observed laconically, his pale-blue eyes wandering round the semicircle of the promenade, where passed the endless procession of painted ghosts enveloped in a kindly obliterating cloud of tobacco smoke, down into the well of the auditorium, whence rose the continuous din of laughter, popping corks, and more smoke.

"It's all rather beastly, isn't it?" he added reflectively.

They passed through the open glass doors of the crowded buffet, and sat at one of the little round tables in a corner, where they were presently joined—without invitation—by a travesty of a young girl in short skirts and a pair of very small and very shiny shoes that were evidently hurting her horribly. Stone blushed to the roots of his hair, and from that moment became the target of the woman's attention. Blushes in the "prom"! Sprague saw that she was staggered with their possibilities.

Amurrica, you bet! Didn't she just know God's own country from Frisco to little old Noo York?

At this juncture Sprague ventured to suggest that New York was neither little nor old, but very big and very new; but he was promptly warned of his trespass by a lightning lowering of a penciled eyelid.

Amurricans know how to treat women, you bet! If only she could get back—if only— And to think that a bit of paper would do the stunt! She had the rest saved by working overtime on a typewriter— Here she saw for the first time what Sprague had noticed a few seconds before; Stone was sitting as one petrified—a man dead save for his eyes, which were fixed in an uncanny stare on a table in the opposite corner.

"Wake up, man!" Sprague called. "We've got to drink this."

Stone did not answer. Sprague studied his face; it was hard and set; curious, drawn lines hovered about the mouth; and in the garish light of the chandelier Sprague saw that it was bloodless. He followed the direction of the American's gaze, and found it centered upon a tall, overdressed woman, who was alternately sipping *crème de menthe* and talking earnestly to a vacuous youth in evening dress.

The instant he looked at the face Sprague knew that he had seen it before; yet for a full minute his mind refused to supply the connection; then in a flash it came to him, full, strong, undeniable; the hair was no longer parted in the middle, but piled high in glistening coils to the brim of an overfeathered hat—that was the difference, almost the sole difference, between the face at the table and the face in the locket Stone had shown him on the deck of the *Orontes*.

The lady of the shiny shoes gulped the contents of her glass, and rose with an injured air. Stone did not notice her as she hobbled from the buffet; Sprague tried to think. Watching the American's profile across the table, he conjured up in his mind's eye the picture that was burning into the man's

brain, obliterating, casting out, one after the other, the ideas that had held him chained so long. "Disease, smallpox, anything!" what were they to this? And as yet he saw her only at a distance, set off by the artful lighting of the buffet; for the cure to be complete, wait until—

"Some one you know?" Sprague queried, and Stone moved, but the words conveyed nothing to him. He rose slowly and crossed the room. Another "turn" was on, and it was almost empty now, so that Sprague saw all that passed.

Stone had almost reached the table before the woman looked up, and then the blood ebbed from her face entirely; the penciled eyebrows and lids, even the powder, seemed to stand out in relief against the gray parchment of her face. They gazed at each other for what seemed an age to Sprague; then Stone moistened his lips.

"Where is he?" he demanded, in a voice low, even, and unusually distinct.

The question seemed to break the spell, and the youth, scenting a scene, evaporated through the buffet doors into the semidarkness of the promenade. The woman's head bent slowly forward, her hands flew to her face, for a second she rallied, and a sickly smile twisted her lips, then she collapsed entirely.

Sprague left them.

Outside, in Leicester Square, underneath the stars, he lit a cigar, and tried to laugh.

"Fate plays a rough game sometimes—but, heavens, how thorough!" he mused, turning mechanically toward Charing Cross Road. "Poor old Stone! Perhaps he will come out of his shell now. Poor old Stone!"

Sprague waited up for him with a pipe and his thoughts, and it was one o'clock before he appeared. His face was set in its accustomed gravity as he sank into a chair, crossed his bony knees, and swung a ponderous foot slowly up and down.

"I'm sorry you were dragged into the affair like that," he apologized at last. "Of course you recognized her?"

"My dear fellow, don't mention it," Sprague blurted hurriedly. "I was glad—I mean, I only hope you won't take it too much to heart, that you will see what I meant—now—"

Stone studied him with a slight air of puzzlement, and flicked his cigar ash into the fender.

"We shall go to America," he said slowly, "if I succeed."

"Succeed? I don't quite follow."

"In persuading her to become my wife," said Stone.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

Somewhere down in the Gray's Inn Road a piano organ was grinding out its repertoire of hackneyed airs, elaborated with impossible runs and flourishes; and this, combined with the intermittent roar of electric trams, the rumble of slower traffic, and shrill street cries, floated up to Sprague as he sat by the window in a bedlam of irritating sound.

Before him on the little table lay a writing pad, the fair surface of its topmost sheet disfigured with a few lines of writing viciously obliterated. He sat staring at it with knitted brows for perhaps five minutes; then, as the piano commenced an uncalled-for encore directly under his window, he breathed an emphatic expletive, and pushed back his chair.

"And yet Thackeray could write at an 'at home,'" he muttered. "Perhaps that accounts—"

Still with a dissatisfied frown, he donned his coat and hat and passed out into the street.

A cabman raised his whip, and Sprague nodded; then, as the hansom drove up to the curb, he flushed with annoyance at his own absent-mindedness.

"Sorry to have troubled you," he said. "I forgot—I can't afford it."

The simplicity of the announcement had an extraordinary effect on the jehu; he said nothing, and, flicking his horse, was soon lost in the maze of traffic.

Sprague laughed, and, thrusting his hands deep into his overcoat pockets,



turned his steps toward Chancery Lane. His thoughts traveled involuntarily back over the past three weeks—the torture of them. The inclination—even the ability—to work had apparently deserted him with the necessity, and the exasperation of it was written in his face. Its tan was gone; there were shadows born of late hours and unwholesome air beneath his eyes; and the lines about his mouth bespoke overtaxed nerves. He had tried—God! how he had tried!—and the result was on the topmost sheet of the writing pad back in his room.

He quickened his pace at the thought, and turned into the Strand, to stand dumfounded a moment later in the middle of the pavement, an unconscious obstruction in the hurrying stream of passers-by, while he stared at a poster on a hoarding across the street.

He had seen it many times before, and felt a certain pride in the restraint of its coloring and design:

**OLYMPIC THEATER**  
**MISS NINA HOLMES**

presents

**"LORETTE"**

A drama in three acts

by

John Sprague

But now another notice was pasted across it from corner to corner, and the words "LAST NIGHTS" confronted him in letters of fire.

For the past week he had hardly left his rooms; this, of course, accounted for his not having learned before that for some reason "Lorette"—his "Lorette"—was a ghastly failure.

He moved on at last, and, seized with a sudden impulse, turned into a "tube" station, and took train for Maida Vale.

Miss Holmes, in a tasteful dressing jacket of pale-blue silk, was half lying, half sitting against the pillows, alternately munching dry toast and sipping weak tea, when Sprague was shown into the room.

She greeted him with a slightly forced cheerfulness.

"I've been expecting you all the week," she said, indicating a white-enamelled chair.

"In fact, ever since the 'last-nights' announcement," Sprague suggested.

"Yes, you poor boy—"

"Please don't trouble; I didn't come for sympathy." Sprague waved a large hand in unconscious eloquence. "As a matter of fact, I didn't expect you'd see me. According to all the laws of precedent, you ought to throw me away like an old boot; but before you do that would you mind telling me what was wrong—it may help in the future."

Miss Holmes held a morsel of toast between a dainty finger and thumb, and studied Sprague over it. She liked the boy—for himself. His candor had a knack of drawing her out of herself, which was refreshing.

"I'm afraid I can't, because I don't quite know; perhaps I'm 'going out.'"

"Oh, that's nonsense!" said Sprague, with a hint of impatience; and Miss Holmes brightened visibly. "It was either the play or the theater—which? I'm asking because if it was the play I shall never write another; if it was the theater I may. So please be definite."

Then it was that Miss Nina Holmes admitted to this young man what she would have withheld on the rack to any one else—that it was the theater—her incomparable little bandbox of a theater. That what she had always looked upon as her audience—the stalls and dress circle—was not her audience at all, but the orange-sucking pit and gallery.

Her disgust forced a laugh from Sprague.

"And so," she ended, with whimsical resignation, "I'm going to give the dear things what they want, and where they want it; the Amphitheater has offered me two hundred a week for a couple of scenes with Howard, and I've let the Olympic to a flat-footed woman who does Italian dances."

Sprague went over to the bed and held out his hand.

"Good-by," he said. "There's no need to wish you every success."

Something in his voice seemed to arrest Miss Holmes' attention. He had reached the door when she suddenly sat upright and looked at him over the foot of the bed.

"This doesn't mean anything serious to you, does it?" she queried. "I mean financially."

"Do I look like it?" Sprague smiled as he shut the door.

He smiled again as the lift wafted him to the ground floor at the thought of the fifteen pounds in the Birkbeck Bank that stood between him and actual want. Indeed, as he left the "tube" at Regent Street with the idea of a roundabout walk home, he was conscious of a vague surprise at his own elation of mind under circumstances that should have been most distressing.

Sprague was not much addicted to self-analysis, but by the time he reached the Circus he had traced the cause to the fact that his mind was made up finally, irrevocably. He said as much to a dummy in the window of Swan & Edgar's, and turned—almost into the arms of Millicent Waring.

"Jack!" she exclaimed, and nearly dropped the toy pug she was carrying.

Sprague raised his hat and smiled amiably.

"How are you?" he said. "But there's no need to ask." His eyes traveled swiftly from the neat fur toque to the equally neat patent-leather shoes—she had always dressed well, he remembered. "Let me congratulate you instead."

The blood surged to the girl's face as she tucked the pug more securely into the curve of her arm.

"And I must congratulate you," she returned. "I thought it splendid."

"Oh, the play! Thanks," Sprague laughed. "Let's hope your cause for congratulation will prove a little more substantial than mine; perhaps you noticed that 'Lorette' is in her last three nights."

"Yes. Whatever is the reason? But take me to tea somewhere; I want to talk."

"I will on one condition," said Sprague.

"And that?"

"That you pay for it. I can't afford luxuries."

They found an unoccupied corner in the Cottage Tea Room, and when the pug had been carefully deposited in the cushions the girl turned to Sprague with an air of mingled amusement and perplexity.

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"Exactly what I say; I haven't any money to speak of." Sprague smiled amusedly into her eyes.

"Is this a joke?"

"I hope it's going to be, but I'm hardly in a position to judge yet; you see, I still have fifteen pounds; when that's gone I can tell you more definitely."

"Jack, are you mad?"

The girl's eyes held genuine alarm; even the pug was forgotten, and lay breathing audibly into her muff.

"Never more sane," said Sprague cheerfully. "Don't you see? I've thought in turn that I was a business man, a cad, a cowboy, an actor, a short-story writer, and a playwright. When those fifteen pounds are gone I shall know what the mischief I am. Perhaps I shall turn out to be a man; think of the joys of discovery! The man who finds the south pole won't be in it with me."

"A cad?" the girl murmured. "I don't seem to remember your being that."

"Don't you? Not when I was trying to marry you for your money?"

"But you ran away."

"Not without breaking off the engagement. By the way, I'm glad it's Duprez—he's a good sort. Ah, I see you haven't forgotten."

"No," said the girl, dropping the third lump of sugar into the cup, "I haven't forgotten."

She watched him surreptitiously as he drank, and a wistful shadow crossed her face.

"You're just the same," she said presently.

"I'm afraid so," Sprague admitted.

"I'm waiting for that fifteen pounds to work the transformation."

"What are you going to do?"

"Take the first boat for Australia."

"On fifteen pounds?"

"Ah, ha!" He leaned over the table with boyish enthusiasm. "That is one of the drawbacks of your station; you wot not of the ways and means of the penurious. We are cunning. Economy with us is a fine art. We take an unholy joy in defrauding governments—especially a labor government. I propose to travel twelve thousand odd miles for the sum of five pounds—as a farmer, a butler, a coachman, or a plumber; I'm not sure which yet."

"Good heavens!"

"Save your ejaculations until the climax, for, as a representative of any one of these admirable callings, I am entitled to take my wife and an unlimited number of children—still for the five pounds, mark you—and remain as a guest of the said government for two weeks at the end of my journey—how now?"

The girl was between laughter and tears.

"Don't go!" she said suddenly.

Sprague leaned back on the cushions and looked at her across the table.

"I've got to work," he said, with sudden gravity, "and if I have to soil these lovely white hands of mine with a pick or a spade I'll do it in the sunshine for nine shillings a day, instead of in the rain for five."

"But—but it's madness! Surely there's some other way——"

Sprague slowly shook his head, and a look came into his face that the girl across the table was at a loss to understand.

"I used to think so," he said, more to himself than to her; "but Stone is right——" He rose abruptly. "I must be going."

As they said good-by the girl looked into his eyes with a half smile hovering about her mouth.

"Are you sure that nothing besides the sunshine and nine shillings a day

is taking you back to Australia?" she asked.

"Quite," Sprague replied; and he meant it.

She watched his tall figure threading its way across the Circus, then turned and walked slowly toward a waiting brougham. In it sat a military-looking gentleman with a fair mustache, alternately consulting his watch and glancing up and down the pavement with a frown. But he said nothing when the girl sank onto the cushions at his side.

Presently she sighed.

"What's up?" demanded the military-looking gentleman.

"Nothing," she answered. "I was only thinking."

The next minute she had grasped his arm.

"I've forgotten Peter," she gasped.

"Good Lord!" said the military-looking gentleman.

The first thing that Sprague did after reaching his rooms was to rip off the top sheet of the writing pad, crumple it into a firm ball, and fling it into the fender. Then he went into the bedroom and dragged a battered, label-plastered trunk from under the bed, and stood contemplating it lovingly.

At this juncture Stone entered. Sprague looked up in some surprise, for the American had not put in an appearance for nearly two weeks. His face was quietly radiant.

"Well?" Sprague suggested.

"It's all fixed," said Stone, lying back on the bed and staring ecstatically at the ceiling. "We're sailing for New York the day after to-morrow. We can get the divorce without any difficulty; the beast deserted her a year after marriage. She's been like that—as we found her—for two years. Think of it!" He struggled to his feet, and paced the rooms with gigantic strides. "It took me nearly two weeks to persuade her, Sprague—I nearly lost hope—she ran away from me once, but I found her. She said it wasn't fair—to me—that she cared too much; she would never do it; but I told her—I

told her what I told you that night on the *Orontes*, and it's all fixed——"

He came to a stop before the fireplace.

"What are you doing?" he demanded suddenly.

"Packing my swag," said Sprague. He was aware that he envied this man his happiness, and felt ashamed. "I'm sailing for Australia the day after tomorrow."

"And the destiny?"

Stone stood with long legs slightly apart, looking down on him with his slow, compassionate smile.

Sprague threw a shirt into the trunk and trod on it.

"Destiny be damned!" he said.

Stone remained silent.

"'Lorette' is a frost," Sprague added.

The American took a leisurely seat on the edge of the bed, and studied his gigantic feet.

"That's too bad," he drawled; "too bad—especially as it was a good play."

Sprague looked up.

"Do you honestly think so?" he demanded.

"I've told you what I think about it," said Stone.

Sprague rose deliberately, and went over to the little table by the window. He sat writing for perhaps two minutes, then handed Stone what he had written, together with a battered manuscript threaded with a boot lace.

"Permit me," he said, with mock impressiveness, "to present you with the remains of one 'Lorette,' who perished of exposure and frostbite after a brief, but all too long, career of three weeks. 'Here lies cheap destiny!'"

For a moment Stone hesitated, then took the proffered papers, and thrust them into a spacious overcoat pocket.

"Thanks," he said gravely. "Let me have your address, will you? I should like to meet you again after we're married—if you don't mind."

"So should I," said Sprague, with a brusqueness assumed by those who have an instinctive horror of sentiment between men. "G. P. O., Sydney, will always find me in the long run."

There was a pause while Stone went to the window and looked down into the street.

"What are you going to do out there?" he asked presently.

"Chase my destiny," said Sprague, crushing the heel of a riding boot into the silk facing of a dinner jacket. "Is it possible to look like a coachman without side whiskers?"

## CHAPTER XV.

At Adelaide the gentleman in the imitation-tweed suit staggered up the gangway with a baby in one arm and a large brown paper bag in the other, and sank down on the nearest seat with a sigh of content.

His wife followed suit, and their three children—all apparently the same age—ranged themselves in a semicircle on the deck, and cast longing eyes on the brown paper bag, which their father proceeded to open with a mysterious reverence.

"Gripes!" he announced. "Gripes fer tuppence er pound—and look at 'em!"

He dangled a bunch tantalizingly above the baby, who promptly grabbed a chubby handful and crushed it to a juicy mess. "Oh, 'Enery!" reproached the mother, and was upheld in her protest by the clamoring children.

"'Ere, 'ere, 'ere!" the father remonstrated, essaying the delicate task of dividing a bunch of grapes into three equal parts and distributing them among six eager hands.

The mother spread the paper bag carefully on the deck.

"Now put yer skins and pips on 'ere, and don't swaller 'em, mind——'Ullo! Wot's this?"

From a neglected corner of the bag she drew forth a mysterious-looking object not unlike a green fig, and eyed it critically. "I dunno," her husband admitted; "the bloke in the shop called it passion fruit, but I told 'im I'd chance it; give it to 'Enery."

'Enery was evidently not of a suspicious nature, for he seized the overripe

fruit with a gusto that ejected its slimy green contents in a neat jet into his left eye.

These little episodes, and many like them, had supplied Sprague with entertainment ever since the London and India Docks had melted into nondescript murk behind the *Dorset's* stern. To him it was a source of unending delight to drag his deck chair—a luxury procurable for half a crown the voyage—behind ventilator or davit and surreptitiously hear and watch his fellow emigrants—for the most part, stunted products of office and factory—expanding under the kindly influence of sunlight and ozone.

But not so the youth of the art-colored tie. They bored him to extinction. As far as Sprague could gather, everything bored him, and always to "extinction"; the pity of it was, he was never quite extinguished. The accommodation was a "scandal," and the food "execrable," until the gentleman of the imitation tweeds hinted that one could hardly expect "'ummin' birds on a six weeks' trip for five quid," and advised him to try the saloon.

After leaving Melbourne he was seen in the company of a saloon passenger, walking the promenade deck, and talking volubly. He was "in with the nobs," as the gentleman in imitation tweeds put it, and thereafter was noticed to wear a more hopeful expression.

During the evening he confided to Sprague, as "the only decent chap on the ship, by Jove!" that he had got a job. The new acquaintance was a surveyor from Bundaberg, who wanted men, but—and here the delicacy of the thing was apparent—he had a rooted objection to the ordinary sort of immigrant; that was why he had singled out the youth of the art-colored tie and offered him ten shillings a day.

"Fact is," he added, "he wants gentlemen—you know what I mean—a couple of decent fellows he can trust; that's why he's prepared to pay nearly double the ordinary wages. The last gang got away with the instruments—I don't see why you shouldn't stand a

chance." Sprague acknowledged the compliment with a modest laugh.

"Thanks," he said; "but I'm not a gentleman—I'm a plumber." And for a time the matter dropped.

Sprague's thoughts were amply occupied as the *Dorset* forged past the "Heads" and up the harbor fairway.

Sydney can be cold in May, and he told himself that it was this that made the difference as he stood at the ship's rail watching the familiar landmarks glide by to port, and trying to think it was all the same—just the same—as when he had left it four months ago.

Here were the blue, transparent waters and the clean sunlight, the green slopes splashed with red-tiled houses, the musical clang of telegraph bells and the answering churn of propellers as the white ferryboats glided to and from Circular Quay like majestic swans—all the things he had so longed to see during those three impotent and ghastly weeks in Gray's Inn Road; yet—what an infernal difference the cold made! He shivered involuntarily, and went down to his cabin, where the other nine occupants were engaged in a frenzied hunt for their belongings, and a desultory altercation as to whether a brown and moving speck on South Head had been a man or a kangaroo.

He left the trunk and suit case that composed his luggage at the wharf, and on a sudden impulse boarded the Manly ferry. Yes, the same three Italians, with the same watchful eye for a well-turned ankle, discoursed the selfsame selections on harp, piccolo, and violin; nothing was different—except the nipping westerly.

At Manly the corso was almost deserted, and, glad of the exercise after shipboard confinement, Sprague walked briskly to Queenscliff.

At the foot of the flight of steps he stopped and filled his pipe. He was aware that his pulse had quickened, that memories crowded in on him with an uncanny vividness. But when he found himself watching for a fluttering blue kimono on the cliff path beyond

the cove, he anathematized himself for a fool, and trudged up the steps.

The Haven was empty, and a sturdy tree of the Walker's Forest species that had taken root at the very door bore a notice: "To be let or sold; apply F. J. Walker."

The kerosene-tin shower bath hung rusting and rattling on its cord below the rain-water tank, and under a tree bush Sprague spied a depleted knuckle bone, mute testimony to Robert's thoroughness.

The white house on the cliff's summit looked equally desolate as Sprague approached it with a slow gait and strangely drooping shoulders; and when another announcement met his eye, pasted to the stone gateposts of the avenue, he turned away, sick at heart. What had happened to his world in four short months? He asked the question of the blue Pacific, the glistening white curve of Manly beach, and the dark-green grove of Norfolk Island pines; and they told him that he was penniless, that he was a failure, that the wintry wind had chilled at once his marrow and his outlook; but the true answer sprang unbidden from his heart—that he would never meet Meg Bettington again.

There are deeps below deeps of boarding-house accommodation in Sydney, but a fair sample of the lower middle-class establishment is to be found in Wynard Square. Here, ranged in dreary sequence about a patch of greensward and soiled vegetation, yawning portals await the advent of Sydney's floating population.

Through one of these Sprague duly floated, and was led up three flights of threadbare stair carpet by a maid who smiled alluringly over her shoulder on each succeeding landing. She opened the bedroom door without knocking, and surprised a young gentleman in his shirt sleeves, studying his tongue in the looking-glass with stern disapproval.

"Oh, Mr. Green!" she exclaimed.

"Mr. Green" drew a silk handker-

chief from his left cuff, and blew his nose without emotion.

"Thank you," said Sprague. "This will do."

But Mr. Green seemed to think otherwise, and a whispered altercation took place in the passage:

"I can't 'elp it, can I? Oh, that'll be all right; you see— 'E'll be out all dye—" After which assurance, the maid drifted down the passage, and Mr. Green proceeded to release a pair of evening-dress trousers from the pressure of his mattress.

Sprague sat on his light-gray counterpane, and smiled apologetically.

"I'm sorry to intrude," he said; "but I've been to three other places, and they're all worse than this at the price."

"Then I'm sorry for them!" exploded Mr. Green. "They talk about indignities the profession had to suffer in the old days, but was it a patch on this?" He indicated the humble apartment with a dramatic gesture. "And do you know the reason of it? A question of merit, you say." Sprague had said nothing of the sort, but refrained from contradiction. "A question of merit! By cripes, no! It's just this—that Australia's got no time for anything she produces herself, least of all genuine talent; it's got to be imported, like everything else, before she'll recognize it; that's why we're forced to live in a hole like this while imported punk puts up at the Australia."

He paused in the process of disposing a fringe of greasy blond hair to his liking.

"Look at our actors, and artists, and singers. They all have to clear out—couldn't make bread and butter out here—and what do they do at home? Sail straight to the top of the tree, take London by storm— What are you laughing at?"

Sprague was not laughing, and said so.

"I was only taking an intelligent interest," he defended. "All you say is perfectly true, and, by your own showing, the state of things is just as it should be."



"As it should be!" Mr. Green turned, with one-half of the blond fringe swept to the back of his head, and the other awaiting like treatment over his left eye.

"Yes—perfectly simple. The man with the talent merely goes home and proves his worth, as so many Australians have done; then comes back with the hall mark of European opinion, and takes his natural place at the top of the tree in his own country. What straighter road to success can you possibly want?"

Mr. Green eyed the stranger with a look of discernment.

"Just arrived?" he queried irrelevantly.

"Yes."

"What's your line?"

"I'm a plumber."

"Do you feel like a hundred up before tea?"

During the game—for ten shillings a side, and on a table that had once been an "Alcock" and was now confessedly a "boarding house"—the horrible truth, which Sprague had begun to fear, revealed itself—he had happened on "a private boarding establishment for theatricals." The place reeked of them—carefully sorted after the manner of a grocer's "new-laid" eggs, "fresh" eggs, and "eggs"—the "genteels" occupying the first floor, the "shabby genteels" the second, and the "shabbies" anything from that upward. The atmosphere was so saturated with personal pronouns and strange phrases that Sprague was content to lose his ten shillings with a good grace and escape to the dining room.

"Tea" was in progress, and the first face his glance rested on—pink and ingenuous as ever—was that of the youth with the art-colored tie, who welcomed him as a long-lost brother.

What—no work yet? That was too bad; personally he had had several offers, but was, of course, bound to the surveyor. It wouldn't be cricket to go back on him now. He was to meet him that night in the Marble Bar and sign an agreement; would Sprague care to come along? There was still an open-

ing if he cared to take it. Oh, plumber be hanged for a yarn!

For lack of something better to do, Sprague went along, and as they passed the amphitheater entrance to Her Majesty's Theater he caught a fleeting glimpse of Mr. Green assiduously collecting tickets at the door.

The Marble Bar is distinctly comfortable, and often entertaining; otherwise the long wait that ensued would have grown monotonous. As it was, Sprague was enthralled by the strategic maneuvers of a tall barmaid with peroxide hair, who was trying to persuade three separate customers that her smile was for them and them alone.

The youth with the art-colored tie was the first to display restlessness. His glance followed the frieze of decorative art, wandered to the clock, the swinging doors, and back to the clock. Then, with a surreptitious eye on Sprague, he extracted four bank notes from his pocketbook and examined them with sudden interest. A flush mounted to his forehead, and he rose with an air of determination.

"Have a drink?" he suggested; and, advancing on the peroxide lady with elaborate unconcern, pushed a note across the bar.

She had half turned when her glance fell upon the crude counterfeit, and her expression showed every indication of assuming a dignified hauteur until her eye traveled to the youth's perspiring face, and softened into something very like compassion.

"You'd better put that away before you get into trouble, sonny," she said; and he obeyed with an absurd snigger.

They carried their glasses to a table.

"I've been robbed!" he breathed, with the incredulity of the hypergullable. "I've been robbed!"

His hand clung limply to his breast pocket; his eyes were fastened unseeing on the spittoon. "I thought the beggar looked crooked, but he only wanted change, and he left the theodolite—"

With a bound, he was back at the bar.

"That parcel—yes, I know—it was

left in my charge, and I gave it to you this afternoon—to take care of—don't you remember?"

Luckily the peroxide lady did remember, and winked sorrowfully at Sprague while the youth tore frenziedly at the brown paper coverings.

"They're worth sixty pounds, you know," he babbled hopelessly.

A neat cardboard box was at last exposed to view, and, reposing inside it—two beautifully symmetrical red bricks.

The next morning Sprague deliberately neglected to shave, divested himself of his collar, and strolled down Elizabeth Street until he came to a blackboard outside an employment agency, displaying the following notices in chalk:

|                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Gen'l. ....          | 15 shillings |
| Cook—Country .....   | 35 shillings |
| Boundary rider ..... | 20 shillings |

The last item held his attention for perhaps two minutes; then he squared his shoulders and passed inside.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Snow lay on Monaro; and still drifted down from a leaden sky. Gum-tree branches in full leaf creaked and snapped under the burden of it, and the roar of Snowy River was muffled to a low murmur by the tunnel of ice that hemmed it in.

Somewhere up in the white silence of the hill a bell tinkled faintly, and, growing in volume, burst into a loud jangling, as a band of yearling horses, with streaming, untrimmed manes and tails, broke from the bush and came to a sudden halt on the open plain.

A rider followed at a gallop, and, reining in his steaming horse, dismounted to tighten a girth. Seemingly his work was done, for, after casting a backward glance at the horses, he rode slowly back the way he had come.

At a break in the boundary fence, where an overtaxed bloodwood had crashed through rails and wire, he dismounted again, and roughly repaired them, while the yearlings he had left on the plain half an hour before stole

back to watch his final efforts with pricked ears and distended nostrils.

When he had strained the last wire the man shook his fist at them defiantly.

"How now, my braves?" he quoted. "Methinks I have thee on the hip!" After which extraordinary pronouncement, he mounted and cantered easily down the stock route to camp.

It was the same as five other boundary riders' camps on Kippara Station—twelve by fifteen, built of ironbark slabs, papered with full-page illustrations from the *Worker*, the *Sydney Mail*, and the ubiquitous *Bulletin*, and furnished with an open fireplace of water-worn river cobbles, a table, a couple of packing cases, and bunks made of chaff bags slung on saplings. Sprague had come to know each of the five as only a man can who lives alone, and had reached the conclusion that they differed solely in the number and virility of the cockroaches that played hide and seek on their walls.

Small things had always interested him, and now he had developed an almost unwholesome eye for detail. There were ten sheets of iron on the roof of the camp, and fifty corrugations on each sheet. There were three Norman Lindsay cartoons on the walls of camp No. 2, and five in camp No. 4; seventy-five river cobbles in the fireplace of camp No. 3, and eighty-two in camp No. 5. All these things he knew without knowing that he knew them, until one evening he caught himself recalling Stone's minute calculations in the Cascade lumbering camp, and realized, with something of a shock, that he was inclining toward a like proficiency. Was he, too, becoming a "mechanical contrivance for doing some crude work"? Perhaps; and, if so, what of it? Better an efficient machine than a human failure.

To-night, after the inevitable damper, tea, corned beef, and pickles, he stood in the doorway, smoking and thinking, as he had smoked and thought every night for the past three months. The sun was sinking below the distant edge of the plain, and the

glory of its dying rays touched with magic, rose-tipped fingers the vast snow plains of Mount Kosciusko. The majestic beauty of the scene had often brought balm to his soul, but to-night, for some reason, its spell was lacking; he was conscious of a vague unrest, as if the twin devils of doubt and discontent that he had conquered were rising again to torture him. Was it possible that this life was to be his destiny? Was it possible, when the plots of three excellent plays and numberless stories ran riot in his brain, shouting to be written?

Suddenly he looked up. So faintly as to be almost inaudible, he heard the strains of a waltz—one—two bars before it died away as magically as it had come; of course, the wind had veered, and the string orchestra was playing on the rink of the Kosciusko Hotel.

The tiny snatch of music had a strange effect on Sprague. It was as if a voice from the outside world had called—and he must obey. For perhaps half an hour he fought the inclination; then, on an impulse, he saddled his horse and set out, at first picking circuitous ways around newly formed snowdrifts, then plunging recklessly through them, until at the end of an hour's hard riding he reined in on an eminence, to breathe his horse, and looked across a snow-clad valley to where a constellation of twinkling lights picked out the hotel.

He gave his horse to one of the stable hands, and, ignoring the mild interrogation of the man's look, strode around to the hall.

Under ordinary circumstances, the appearance of a tall, bearded man in work-worn moleskins might have created something of a sensation in Australia's haunt of winter fashion; but to-night a fancy-dress ball was in progress, and in the press Sprague went unnoticed.

Up and down the stairs passed endless streams of Gretchens, Pierrots, and what not, filling the great hall with a restless sea of heterogeneous humanity; and Sprague had almost persuaded

himself that he was back at a Swiss winter resort of his acquaintance when a youth with a slightly flushed face and an irresponsible manner flung himself on the next seat and dispelled the illusion by addressing him in unadulterated Australian:

"By cripes, this costume'll be the death of me!" His body and legs were incased in genuine kangaroo skin—which perhaps accounted for the perspiration that streamed down his face—and the "property" head of the animal dangled in dislocated abandon over his left shoulder.

"They told me in there," he continued, pointing an accusing finger in the direction of the dining room, "that kangaroos can't dance; but I showed 'em. I hopped through a waltz and half through the lancers, but they chucked me out. Said kangaroos couldn't dance."

"Too bad," murmured Sprague sympathetically.

"That's right. I told 'em they were scared of me getting away with the first prize, and they said I was drunk. I asked 'em how a kangaroo could get drunk if it couldn't dance—or how it could get drunk and not dance—or something—and they chucked me out. Rotten lot! Absolutely rotten lot! What'er you supposed to be?"

"A boundary rider," said Sprague.

"Bonzer; absolutely bonzer! Where did you rake up the beard?"

"I grew it."

"Then, my oath, you've got the prize. Help!"

For a moment the kangaroo seemed in danger of succumbing to the mirth provoked by this pleasantry, but rallied sufficiently to lean back in his chair and shake an aggressive fist at a knot of men gathered about the dining-room door.

"Rotten lot!" he murmured. "Absolutely rotten lot! And the women—wouldn't have 'em on me mind! They're women, all right, down in Sydney; but give 'em climate à la Kosciusko, and watch the pedestal act. It's wonderful what climate will do."

The kangaroo sighed.

"There's one blessing about it, though," he added pensively. "None of 'em are fit to look at, anyway—except her." His eyes snapped at the mention of the magic pronoun. "You know who I mean; half the hotel's chipping me about it, but, my troubles, she's bonzer!"

Sprague was constrained to admit that "she" was.

"She's open air, and she's Australian—but she's got ankles—I've been to Europe, and know what I'm talking about; if there's one in this hotel can hold a candle to her—I'll eat my shirt; and it's a shrieking, sickening sin to see her wasting herself on that potbellied American who wears his hair 'basin' cut and eats soup like a suction pump."

The kangaroo leaned back, simmering in righteous indignation.

"I took 'em for father and daughter till she told me; never got such a shock in me life. Not that it made much difference, because nothing can get within cooee of her but that mangy black pup of hers. Says it's a cocker spaniel—looks to me more like a cross between a hearthrug and a coal shovel. What's that?"

"I only asked her name."

Sprague was leaning over the arm of his chair.

"Name! Don't you know little Mrs. Walker? How long have you been here?"

Sprague glanced at the clock.

"About half an hour," he said; "and I must be going."

"Then you're not staying here? Who the devil are you?"

"I told you," said Sprague; "I'm a boundary rider. Good night."

He was halfway to the stables when something ran between his legs, almost upsetting him, and by the time he had regained his balance Robert was on him like a thing demented.

For a moment Sprague hesitated—and was lost.

"Hullo, you old blackguard!" he whispered, and administered a hurried, old-time salute on the dog's ribs; but Robert cringed from him with a yelp of pain.

Afterward — long afterward — Sprague told himself that he had intended to go; it was that unaccustomed yelp that detained him. He knelt at the dog's side in the snow, and saw by the light from a window that its left foreleg was stiff and useless. He touched it gingerly, and Robert licked his hand.

"Don't do that!" came a peremptory voice from somewhere above him. "He's lame; he——" Then a hand descended on his shoulder. "You!" said Meg.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Sprague was on his feet, looking down into her face. By the uncertain light of the hotel window, it was the same as when he had last seen it by the moonlight at the cove, and for a moment his eyes drank their fill of her, while his mind—that worker of miracles—leaped back over the past seven months as if they had never been. For an infinitesimal passage of time his world was again complete; and then, like a sleeper awakened suddenly from a dream, he saw the grossness of its fallacies, and the sweet illusion was dispelled.

"What brought you back?" she was saying, and Sprague laughed.

"Don't ask me that," he said. "It's the first question my father puts to me when I go home."

"You've grown a beard," she added, after a pause.

"I've grown a lot of funny things in the last seven months," Sprague answered.

"Won't you tell me about them?"

She was still a child, he decided, as they walked mechanically toward the rink—a child robbed of its birthright. Her face had been molded for laughter, but now, as they stood beside an oil flare, looking with unseeing eyes at the skaters who skimmed the glassy surface of the lake, he saw that in repose her features were touched with an all-pervading sadness.

For some time they stood thus, side by side, and in silence unbroken save for the musical ring of steel on ice.

"Well?" said Meg presently, without looking up; and then Sprague told her of his hopes and his doubts and his despairs, and where they had led him.

"The big things are evidently not for me," he ended; "and, having the advantage over some people of knowing it, I ought to be content with the small—the very small—ones."

"But you're not," said Meg.

"I was—until to-night," Sprague answered.

"To-night?" She looked up suddenly with something of her old vivaciousness in tone and gesture.

"Yes," he said slowly, "to-night. It sounds rather absurd, but it was just as if some one had called me, and I had to obey. Perhaps I'm quietly going mad; at any rate, that is why I came to the hotel to-night."

Meg was staring out across the lake.

"Perhaps you heard me," she said.

For a full minute Sprague was bereft of speech. It seemed that the blood had rushed to his throat and was choking him.

"Isn't he kind to you?" he demanded hoarsely.

For answer Meg looked down on Robert, who sat between them, apparently engrossed in the gyrations of a figure skater.

"He did that," she said.

"How?" Sprague's hands were clenched at his sides.

"A kick; he was drunk. Oh, he doesn't do that sort of thing to me," she added hastily, and with a ghost of a smile when she saw the effect of her words on the man beside her. "He's jealous, that's all."

"And you've called me before?"

"Often."

"And I never heard!"

"I'm glad you didn't; it was no good—I knew it was no good, but I—just—couldn't—help—it. You see, I have no one now."

"Your father?"

"Dad died a week after we were married."

So the victim had submitted herself to life torture for a cause that had been

lost seven days later. The irony of it forced a strange sound from Sprague's lips. Through a mental haze he became aware that Meg was still speaking.

"I can't tell you any more. I believe we're trying to get into some sort of society. He's up in the lounge now, playing bridge with some people who say they know the governor general—I think they're Jews. Then he rides two hours a day for his liver, and——" Suddenly she turned and looked up at him, her face radiant. "If you only knew how good it is to see you again!" she said, and unconsciously her hand rested on his arm.

Sprague shrank from the contact as if he had been stung.

"You mustn't do that," he said harshly; then, noting the pain reflected in her face, went on more gently: "I don't think you understand, Meg. No man can do anything—least of all I. We must part to-night, and never see each other again; can't you understand—don't you see why?"

He spoke as if to a child, and as a child, still awaiting the consummation of love, she listened. Sprague saw that to her it was as if her marriage had never been, and he watched the dawning comprehension in her face with the hopelessness of a man forced to kindle a fire that it may be extinguished.

"Yes," she said presently, "I see why—now. When did you first know?"

The woman's question! It seemed the sex entire reached womanhood by rote. It exasperated Sprague; man-like, he forgot that this was so—that there are many paths to manhood, but to womanhood but one.

"God knows!" he burst out. "I hate to think of it. Can't you see that it drives me mad to think of it? I've been a fool—a purblind, unmitigated fool! I went fifteen thousand miles in search of my precious destiny, when it was there on the beach at Manly—and that you—you should pay for my folly—that that beast——" He broke off suddenly, shutting his teeth on the words that itched to be uttered. What right had he to cavil at another—man

or beast—who had taken what he had left?

"There's the writing," said Meg gently.

She was thinking of *him* now; heavens, was it possible to make a woman understand?

"Writing! Save the mark!" he muttered savagely. "It's a disease. I wish the stuff would come out on me like a rash, and let me be. I must go," he ended abruptly. "Good-by!" And before she realized it, he had turned from her and passed up the beaten track to the hotel.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

When Sprague reached camp he found a visitor in the bunk above his own—the overseer of Kippara Station—and he climbed into bed without disturbing him.

In the morning a red face peered down on him from the clouds of a half-awakened brain.

"Where did you get to last night?" it demanded.

Sprague yawned and threw back the blankets.

"I went up to the hotel."

The overseer winked comprehensively.

"What's her name?"

"Jemima Jorrocks," said Sprague.

"Um! Sounds attractive; where did you get the clobber?"

"Didn't need any," said Sprague, setting "light" to the fire. "I went to the fancy-dress ball as a boundary rider."

The overseer sat on the edge of his bunk and regarded Sprague with as much surprise as he ever allowed to sit on his immobile features.

"By gad, you've got a nerve!" he commented. "There's a letter for you in my saddlebag. Seen anything of the bar-seven yearlings?"

But Sprague had gone out to the stable. It was the first letter he had received for six months, and although contained in a few lines of particularly clear writing he read it three times:

DEAR SPRAGUE: I am back here in Sydney with my wife; please let me know

where I can see you as soon as possible on important business. How goes the destiny? Yours in haste, NATHANIEL STONE.

He thrust it into his pocket with a muttered exclamation, and went into the hut.

"Yes," he said, as if the conversation had never been interrupted; "I found them halfway to their old run; the fence went down in the night. Do you mind telling me what day of the week this is?"

"Friday."

"Thanks." Sprague was scribbling a note in pencil. "Perhaps you wouldn't mind posting this as soon as possible. When will you be going back?"

The overseer pondered the matter while he warmed his hands at a roaring fire. It was nothing for a boundary rider to forget the day of the week and arrive at the station for his supply of tucker on Tuesday under the firm impression that it was Sunday; but this young man puzzled him somewhat; he had never met with a "new chum" at once so absent-minded and so competent.

"Well," he mused, "I was out after those yearlings; but, seeing you found them, I don't see anything to keep me. I'll start when I've had breakfast."

"Ah, yes," said Sprague; "I forgot that." And busied himself with the billy.

"Do you often forget breakfast?"

The overseer was following his movements with amused interest.

"I left it off with my shaving," said Sprague; "it saves trouble."

"I suppose it does," the other agreed. "What are you getting?"

Sprague paused in the process of mixing damper.

"Either a pound or twenty-five shillings—I forget which."

"Oh, you forget your wages, do you? It strikes me you're getting a trifle too forgetful altogether; what do you say to working about the station for thirty?"

Sprague shook his head and clicked to the lid of the camp oven.

"No, thanks," he said; "this is good enough for me."



He had told Stone to come to Kippara—he had no wish to go to Sydney—and for two days the monotony of life was relieved by anticipation of the meeting. On the evening of the third he came home to find a note propped against a jam tin on the table, and as he read it the veins throbbed at his temples.

He crumpled it into a savage ball, thrust it deep into a trouser pocket, and most of the night paced the mud floor of the camp.

With the dawn he was in the saddle and riding the southeast boundary like a madman. He had eaten nothing, but by noon he felt no fatigue, and was only forced to return by the snow that fell and drifted before the wind in ceaseless clouds. His horse took him home, for now it was impossible to see a yard beyond the beast's ears; and on entering the stable he saw that he had a visitor, for the other's horse—an overfed hotel hack, was tethered in a far stall.

Sprague opened the hut door with some interest. It could hardly be Stone.

The man was sitting by the fire, his back to the door, but he turned as the chill air fanned his neck, and Sprague found himself confronting Mr. Walker—aggressively prosperous as ever.

"Good day," he said.

Sprague nodded, and proceeded to shake the snow from his hat and boots.

"I lost my way," volubly proceeded the land agent. "Must have got rattled, I guess. Such a country! I had no notion Australia could be like this. I've seen it in Montana worse than this—forty below zero—but this is an elegant sufficiency for me now. I tell you I was mighty glad to hit your cabin, Mr.—"

"Sprague," said that gentleman, seating himself on a packing case and struggling with a riding boot.

Mr. Walker's mouth opened slightly, and remained open; then he rose from his seat and advanced with a fat hand outstretched.

Sprague appeared not to notice it; he had been wondering where the smell

of whisky was coming from, but as the land agent moved nearer the light he ceased to speculate.

"Why, I'm mighty glad to see you, Mr. Sprague," he said; then, apparently seized with an inspiration: "Have a drink." He drew a heavy flask from his hip pocket.

"No, thanks," said Sprague.

"Come, man; it'll warm you up."

The other shook his head.

"On the water wagon?" queried the land agent lightly.

"No."

"Then what's the matter? It's the right stuff."

"I don't want to drink with you," said Sprague.

"Why?"

"Because I don't like you."

Mr. Walker stood looking down on him for a moment; then he laughed and turned to the fire.

"Well, that's plain, anyway," he said, addressing a sputtering ironbark log; he nodded at it with the air of one exercising a generous tolerance. "And I can hardly wonder at it; I knew you were number two, Mr. Sprague, and I—"

But there he stopped. For a paralyzing moment he thought that the tall man with the beard was going to strike him.

"Don't talk about it!" snapped Sprague. "D'you hear? Talk about money! Oh, you must stop here till the blizzard's over," he added as the other waddled to the door; "but don't talk about that, or—I'll kick you as you kicked my dog!"

A second later he could have bitten his tongue out for the words. The land agent revived like a drooping flower after a shower of rain.

"Oh," he said, "so you've seen my wife!" And, receiving no answer, he returned to his seat by the fire. "Queer!" he mused aloud. "She never told me about it."

Sprague's gaze was centered on the white square of window. It was now quite dark, and the cold had increased, for the snow clung to the glass with-

out melting. Presently he turned from it to the fire.

"Look here, Mr. Walker," he said deliberately, "we dislike each other for our own particular reasons; we're thrown together as long as this storm lasts; let's make the best of an uncomfortable position. Avoid personalities; if you must talk, as I've said, talk about money. For instance, how is Walker's Forest progressing?"

The land agent bridled.

"And supposing I choose to use personalities? I want to give you a hint for your own good, Mr. Sprague; you may remember what I said to you one night on Queenscliff——"

"Then I shall be forced to pitch you out into the snow," said Sprague.

Mr. Walker seemed to digest this ultimatum, and came to the conclusion that the other meant it; also that it is a distressing thing to meet people who mean things when they say them in a twelve-by-fifteen hut, five miles from anywhere. He fell to pondering an entirely new problem, namely, how to "crush" a man who has no money and less respect for it.

So the strangely assorted pair passed the evening, and in the morning the storm was still raging.

"A three days' blizzard," Sprague commented at the breakfast table; "straight from the worst quarter."

Mr. Walker pushed back his packing case with a grunt, and consulted his watch as if it supplied an indication of the weather.

"I'm going," he said shortly. "How long would it take me to get to the hotel?"

"Five miles—against this?" reflected Sprague. "And with a livery-stable horse? About five hours if you got there at all."

The land agent buttoned his coat deliberately.

"I've ridden against worse than this in Montana," he said.

"So have I," Sprague answered, lighting his pipe; "but you'll find it quite bad enough. Don't go on my account; I assure you I am as happy as

the flowers in May, and I warn you it is madness.

His words had an unlooked-for effect. It was not a very striking effect—it might have escaped some people, but Sprague noticed, through a cloud of tobacco smoke, that the other's eyes narrowed, after a manner of their own, and became momentarily fixed.

"So you've been in Montana?" he said, forgetting his rôle of offended dignity.

"Yes," said Sprague, "I've been in Montana." He blew a thin column of smoke toward the roof. "But you needn't disturb yourself; I know nothing about it."

With his head bowed to the blizzard, Mr. Walker muttered into his collar: "I thought we had a corner on bluff. I wonder——"

And he continued to wonder for several hours after he had left the little hut behind him.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Sprague closed the door, flung his hat into a corner, and crossed to the window, where he stood restlessly drumming his fingers on the frozen pane. Then he drew a crumpled note from his pocket and read it for the second time:

We are leaving soon for Sydney. I send you this because I have tried hard to live it all down, and I can't. It is impossible. He struck me to-day. I have reached the end and must see you somehow, somewhere, if you will come. We are at the hotel until Monday——

"And yet I didn't kill him!" Sprague muttered.

He sank down on a packing case, and stared stonily into the fire, his thin, strong fingers mechanically tearing the sheet of paper into narrower and narrower ribbons; then he raised a log with his boot, and thrust them far back among the coals.

By ten o'clock that night the storm had cleared. The wind dropped, and a pale moon, struggling intermittently through the dispersing cloud rack, shed

a sickly brilliance over the interminable snow.

Sprague stood at the open door, heedless of the cold. For the hundredth time he told himself that he had followed the only path of a strong man, but, then, he knew that he was *not* a strong man. What further proof was needed? Two days ago he had thrust the disjointed appeal of a disillusioned girl from his mind with splendid finality, and now—he was voluntarily recalling every sentence, every word, dwelling on them, weighing them.

A dingo howled somewhere out in the white night, and others answered. To Sprague's overwrought brain there was something prophetic in the desolation about him. He slammed to the door with an oath—and half an hour later was riding hard for the hotel.

The faint whinny of a horse floated over the snow, followed by another, and yet another, before Sprague found his own beast answering, and brushed the rime from his eyes to look about him.

Nothing was visible but the same endless expanse of moon-bathed snow, and, not far distant, a stunted gum.

He sat for some time, straining his eyes out over the snow; then suddenly turned his horse's head and cantered toward it.

In a wide circle round the tree a hard path had been tramped in the snow. Inside it was a horse tethered by the bridle reins to a broken limb, the remains of a pitiable attempt at a fire, and a heap of snow-covered cloth. Sprague knew what lay beneath this last.

The man was alive, but unconscious. The cold had penetrated to the brain; another two hours, and it would have finished its work. Sprague shook him violently, buffeted him with his clenched fists, hurled him from side to side in the snow till the perspiration streamed from his forehead. Then he took a box of matches from his pocket, struck one, and applied it to the arm just below the elbow. A faint moan passed the man's lips; the eyelids fluttered and closed, and Sprague fell on

him afresh, rubbing, rubbing until his arms were numb from shoulder to wrist.

"Wake up!" he yelled. "D'you hear? Wake up!"

A dazed comprehension came into the man's eyes, and a twinge of pain distorted his face.

"Ah, it's you, Sprague! Quit, man, quit! You're hurting—like hell!"

Sprague sank back, exhausted.

"Worse than this in Montana," the other rambled on. "Thought we had a corner on bluff—wonder what he meant? I thought this blamed tree was the hotel—think of it! Then I walked around it. God! How many times did I walk round it?"

Suddenly he sat up and looked about him. Sprague was sitting in the snow, still gasping.

"You're played out," said Mr. Walker. "What've you been doing? When did you come?"

"Can you stand?" said Sprague. "No? Then don't get excited; they'll put you right at the hotel. Let me give you a leg up."

He lifted him with difficulty, and thrust him into the stock saddle.

"Sit there," he commanded; "and, for God's sake, don't talk!"

The hotel was asleep when they came to a steaming halt, but the night porter came out to them, and others were soon astir. The land agent sat huddled in a deep leather chair as far from the fire as it had been possible to wheel him; but the warmth of the hall had taken effect, and when a doctor came he was sleeping soundly.

The manager, in a dressing gown, ran his finger down the register.

"Call room fifteen," he ordered tersely. "Tell the lady her husband is back; that there's been an accident—nothing serious."

Sprague, who was warming his gloves at the fire, turned quickly toward the door. The manager followed and touched him on the shoulder.

"Where are you off to?" he demanded bluntly.

"Back to camp," said Sprague.

"What—at this hour? You must be crazy!"

"No," said Sprague, "I'm unusually sane, that's all; good night." And he passed out through the revolving doors just before a blue kimono appeared at the head of the stairs.

## CHAPTER XX.

Two days later, during luncheon, the Hotel Kosciusko was treated to a mild sensation.

Simultaneously with the entry into the dining room of a newly arrived couple, Mr. Walker, who had recovered sufficiently to pose as the hero of the hour, was noticed by those in his vicinity to show sudden and unmistakable signs of distress. His usually ruddy complexion faded to a dirty yellow, and his small eyes seemed to swell and protrude from their flabby pouches like those of an unhappy frog at the mercy of schoolboys.

Seeking the cause of the transformation, all eyes were turned on a tall, rather handsome woman, strikingly pale, and plainly, but tastefully, dressed, who was being escorted to a seat by a gentleman with a noticeably prominent jaw and atrocious tweeds of American cut.

The lady favored Mr. Walker with a protracted, expressionless stare, and gave her attention to the menu.

But this was not all. Mr. Walker rose with surprising dexterity, and hurried from the room, leaving the diners in a state of excited speculation.

The lady was smiling now, and, leaning over the table, she addressed a few words to the gentleman of the jaw. They had an extraordinary effect, for he whipped around as if shot, and half rose from his seat, resuming it only at the earnest entreaty of the lady.

Imagine, then, the sensation, when, an hour later, it became known in that mysterious way peculiar to idle communities that Mr. Walker had shaken the dust—or, rather, the snow—of Kosciusko from his feet, and departed by the two-o'clock lorry, leaving his wife

and her dog the sole occupants of room fifteen.

"It just shows how careful one has to be," said a member of the clique who "knew the governor general."

After lunch Stone interviewed a stable hand.

Kippara? reflected that worthy, scenting American dollars afar. A hack would be two pounds a day, but he would hardly advise so long a ride at this time of year; a gentleman was brought in only the other night—There followed a detailed account of the happenings of two nights ago. Then there was a bob sleigh and its driver who could be hired for three pounds a day. To go back by train and thence to Kippara would mean coaching half the distance and actually doubling it—The hack? Very well; he would advise riding to Kippara's southeast boundary that afternoon, sleeping at one of the camps—quite a usual proceeding—and making the station comfortably the next day.

A few hours later Stone came upon Sprague stretching a wallaby skin on the wall of camp No. 4.

Their meeting was as demonstrative as Anglo-Saxons usually allow such things to be.

"Come into the smoking room," said Sprague, "and help yourself to the whisky and soda."

Stone seated himself on a packing case, and allowed his pale-blue eyes to wander over the mural decorations.

"First and foremost," he drawled, "I want to tell you that you may think you're a cow-puncher—or its Australian equivalent—but you're not. You're a dramatist, with a play on Broadway that's making things hum. When I left it had run a month to crowded houses; there's two thousand doll—I mean four hundred pounds—to your credit at the Bank of New South Wales, head office, and—why the devil don't you whoop?"

Sprague filled his pipe between his knees.

"I gave up that sort of thing with my shaving and my breakfast," he said.

Stone studied him with grave concern.

"What's the matter?" he demanded brusquely. "Where's that destiny you were chasing so assiduously aboard the *Orontes*?"

"I'd rather not talk about it, if you don't mind," said Sprague.

Stone knew that he meant it, and, seeing the disappointment in his friend's face, Sprague hurried on:

"It's been tremendously good of you, old man, and I'll accept the four hundred gratefully, although it is a gift. I'm glad some one likes 'Lorette'; I'll try and write another one of these days. Tell me all about it."

Stone obeyed, and Sprague marveled as he listened. The past four months had worked a miracle in the man—even in his appearance—and again he found himself involuntarily envying the fullness of the other's content. They had experienced no difficulty with the divorce, and so far as he could gather Stone had spent the greater part of his honeymoon in disposing of "Lorette." It had been an instantaneous success; so much Sprague heard with a lack of his old-time enthusiasm that troubled Stone, so that the American was hardly prepared for the effect of his concluding remarks on the episode of the hotel luncheon table.

"There he sat," he was saying, with an unwonted freedom of tone and gesture. "sizzling in his own fat at the head of the table. Eva, with her usual tact, let him go before she told me; but afterward we looked him up in the register. There he was, as Mr. Walker—Mr. and Mrs. Walker, if you please—"

"Do you mind saying that again—the name, I mean—did you say Walker?"

Sprague was gripping the other's wrist like a vise. Stone had never

dreamed the man could look as he did at that moment.

"Yes," he said, "I said Walker. Why?"

In eight hurried words Sprague told him, and as many minutes later was galloping furiously to the hotel.

The rest can better be told in the words of the lady who—as already stated—knew the governor general.

"My dear, I was sitting in the hall when a tall man with a beard and a dirty blue shirt marched straight through it and up the stairs as if the place belonged to him. The porter and two waiters asked him what he wanted, but they might as well have been flies for all the notice he took of them. They say they followed him down the corridor and saw him knock at number fifteen, and the door open and close. Would you mind telling me what it all means? Her husband, you remember—"

"What it all meant" was at that moment engaging the attention of two young people in room fifteen.

"You were never married, Meg; that's all—all that matters. That night at the cove—I should never have gone. I thought I wanted many things, but I never knew what was just the only one until I lost it. And now that I've got it—just the only one—here in my arms, may I keep it always?"

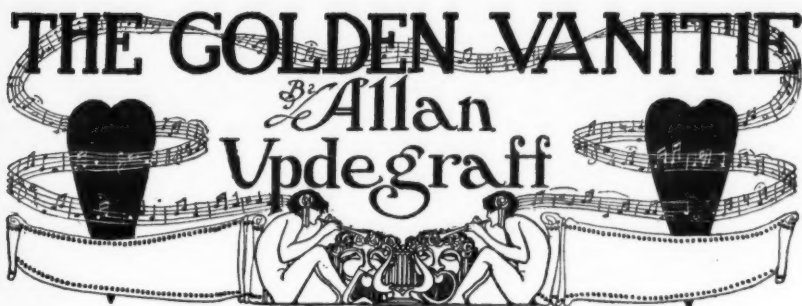
By order of the late owner, whose address is still unknown, the white house on Queenscliff has been sold, together with his other property.

The present occupant is the author of "Lorette" and other plays, and for six months of the year he may be seen almost any day, with his wife and a lame black dog, in the garden overlooking the sea.



# THE GOLDEN VANITIE

*By* Allan  
Updegraff



**W**HATEVER powers concern themselves with memories were good to me this afternoon. I was drowsing in one of those comfortable back seats at a Carnegie Hall song recital when the singer struck up that old ballad beginning:

"There was a gallant ship  
Went a-sailing on the sea;  
And the name of the ship  
Was *The Golden Vanitie*."

The old music, the old words! Back they swept me, back, back so fast that everything blurred before my eyes—back across miles and years to the splendid Hillsbury estate, the splendid Hillsbury house, and the splendid Hillsbury lady. The gates of a seventh heaven of fayerie opened before me. Boyhood that can make a kingdom of a vacant lot—what could it not make of the Hillsbury splendors?

The boy was about twelve years old when he became acquainted with the Hillsbury splendors, and canonized Mrs. Hillsbury as the presiding spirit of them. There was a long, blue fish-pond at one corner of the estate, to which, by a tedious scaling of some ten feet of knit barbed wire, a venturesome boy could attain. Noble fish might be taken from this water—iridescent "shiners," tantalizing "suckers," and now and then, by dazzling chance, a dragon-mouthed pickerel. In the tremulous, fierce, half-terrified excitement of landing one of these last,

one silvery April morning, Mrs. Hillsbury surprised him.

"How do you do?" she asked, smiling amusement and polite surprise.

He could only gawk at her, such a riot of emotions filled his breast. She stood beside a large rock, perhaps a dozen feet away, very tall, slender, and graceful, balancing a little white silken sunshade on a long handle. To the boy's eyes, her face and presence had something of the regal beauty that he had come to associate with angels. He dropped his dragon-mouthed prize, I remember, and trembled, not so much for fear as for sheer admiration and awe.

"Don't be afraid," she called, in a voice like a little bronze dinner gong struck lightly. "I won't bite you. Look out! Your fish is getting back into the water!"

The warning came too late, and even if it had not, the young poacher was in no condition to profit by it. The pickerel made two mighty leaps, fell into the water, and darted for green depths.

The lady was prodigal of regrets: "Oh, that's too bad! Did I scare him? And he was such a fine one, too! But we'll catch another."

"I guess we won't," said the fisherman, childishly covering up all interests save the childish ones he was supposed to have. "They're hard to hook. You don't get one of that kind very often."

Mrs. Hillsbury, laughing at his glum



countenance, laid aside her parasol and came over to the water. Out of her superior knowledge, she assured him that they would get one as large, even larger. He, pretending single-minded engrossment with his tackle, watched her with covert thrills of admiration.

The sleeves of her white dress were of an ancient, prodigious style called "leg o' mutton." The poacher, mechanically threading grasshoppers on his hook, reflected that they made her look like the enameled angels in St. Timothy's, where his soulless soprano led the choir of Sundays. But the angels were much inferior, he also reflected, in lacking the wonderful wide-brimmed, white-feathered hat, and the bright brown waves and masses of hair of the Hillsbury lady. Nor was their presence so fragrant sweet, so rustling friendly.

"Ugh! Do you have to—to thread them on like that? Poor grasshoppers!"

Her squeamishness gave her admirer a feeling of masculine superiority that added the last touch to his enthrallment.

"You do if you're going to catch fish," he informed her shortly. "They soon get used to it."

She hurt his feelings by laughing at this reasonable reply, but the hurt was removed when she sat down, delicate dress and all, on a flat stone by his side. He cast in his spitted insects, and glowered at the painted floater. He knew perfectly well that there was no likelihood of a bite in the shallow water where his bait had fallen; but to cast to a more likely depth would have necessitated leaving the stone at her side. He preferred not to leave the stone.

She soon tired of watching the motionless floater to which he apparently gave his whole attention, and began to talk to him:

"How old are you?"

"Twelve years and three months."

"You are large for your age. And what is your name?"

He told her his name.

"It's a nice name," she assured him, with a spontaneity that went straight

to his heart. "Mine is Ianthe—Ianthe Hillsbury. And where do you go to school? In the town, I suppose?"

He told her about the old rector who was trying to force Latin and Greek and the elementary sciences into his unwilling head. After that she asked where he lived, and seemed much interested in the little house in Cherry Street—the first on the right as you turned off Grant Avenue—and in the good, almost saintlike old aunt who mothered him.

She led him on to talk of himself, laughing frequently at his replies. In fact, she laughed a great deal, laughed in the quick, uncertain manner of a lady not much used to laughing, as if her laughter rose less from amusement than from a brief forgetting of herself. He felt, dimly and inchoately enough, that she was a sad sort of lady. This seemed as it should be. Angels and saints and Latin and Greek goddesses always led more or less troubled lives, were always more or less melancholy. Besides, her sadness gave him an added impulse to make her happy.

When she discovered that he was the leading soprano at St. Timothy's she was interested and pleased.

"I used to be a singer myself," she told him.

"In some big church in St. Louis?" he asked.

She laughed lightly, with a little sobering catch of her breath.

"Not exactly! It doesn't matter where."

After pondering this queer reply a little while—"I suppose," he suggested, "it's pleasanter to live here than to be a singer?"

"No!" she answered, with a sudden bitterness that made him cringe. "No—not exactly."

In a dim, unreasoning way, he understood the pain behind her bitterness; he even understood dimly, unreasoningly a little of the cause for the pain. He ached with helpless sympathy.

"There—we won't talk about that," she resumed gently. "Let's sing something. Do you know Rossini's 'Stabat Mater'?"

He did know it, and, after a little urging, took up one of the plaintive movements. She followed him in a rich mezzo-soprano which so stirred him that he could scarcely hold to his part. Then she suggested various old ballads, some of which he knew, and for perhaps an hour they sang of old, unhappy things, with only the many-colored April woods and the bright water for an audience. The rich vibrance of her voice, the beauty and friendliness, withal the great sadness, of her presence so wrought upon the boy that his throat throbbled for pity and love of her. He began to wish to go away that he might meditate her sad loveliness without its too poignant proximity.

A big fish, breaking the sky-tinted crystal into webs of light among some neighboring lily pads, afforded welcome diversion. The fisherman pretended immediate abandon to this discovery. He motioned for silence, drew his grasshoppers from the water, and "skittered" them skillfully into the midst of the ripples. The fish struck, sent the taut line swishing in useless circles, weakened, was conquered. When it lay gasping on the grass Ianthe was scarcely less delighted than its captor.

"What enormous teeth—and what beautiful mottlings!" she cried. Bending over it, she almost touched its shining body with a white forefinger. "There! Haven't I brought you good luck, after all?"

The triumphant fisherman nerved himself for a compliment.

"It must have been your singing," he said, "that brought him in among the lily pads."

"Oh, my!" she returned, plainly pleased by the conceit. "I didn't think you were such a flatterer!"

"Well, if the fishes would come to hear St. Francis preach," he argued shamefacedly, bending over his prize, "I should certainly think they'd come to hear you sing."

She laughed unreservedly, delightedly, at this, and made him a sweeping bow. He pretended to be absorbed in

examining his fish, too much flustered to look at her.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," she cried suddenly. "We'll eat him together. You admit I helped catch him, so we'll have him for luncheon—and you must come to my house for luncheon with me."

She took a little silver whistle from some fold of her dress, and set it to her lips; but she withdrew it without blowing, and held it out toward the fisherman.

"You blow it," she said. "Blow hard—three times. You can blow it ever so much better than I."

The boy arose, took the sanctified trinket, and blew with all his might.

"Splendid!" she cried. Her every flattery was as if she had fastened a little golden chain around his heart. "Now we'll sit down and wait for a keeper. That was the hurry signal, so we won't have to wait long."

She sat down on the flat stone, and drew aside her skirts to make room for him, smiling in delicious camaraderie.

"And while we're waiting," she continued, "you can tell me about St. Francis. I don't think I ever even heard of him. You see, I'm frightfully ignorant."

He was both shocked and delighted by her ignorance. Authoritatively he enlightened her; he even informed her that he was thinking of adding her to the roster of saints under the title of *Ianthe Piscium*, which means "Ianthe of the Fishes." She thanked him, with her eyes no less than with her mouth, and asked to be informed as to her duties. When his pet aversion and fear, a green-uniformed gamekeeper, came up, Ianthe sent away the pickerel, begged her teacher's pardon for the interruption, and asked him to continue his lesson.

The rest of that morning and early afternoon—the walk under burgeoning oak and willow trees, the entrance into the huge, many-gabled mansion, with its throng of liveried servants, the luncheon in the high, gilt-glittering dining room—all are so many light-touched points in a strange, distorted

chiaroscuro of dreams. There was a Mrs. Prendigast, I remember, who sat at table with them, an oldish, fidgety, sharp-faced lady in black satin; her "leg-o'-mutton" sleeves made her look like an angel also, but a dark one. The wonderfully cooked pickerel and its staring captor were equally beneath her notice.

The latter was cowed and uncomfortable throughout the splendid meal; the very profusion of gold on the tableware weakened his knees. His single remark was that he guessed he'd have to hurry home. Whereupon Mrs. Prendigast cackled. Ianthe's brows were wrinkled with distressed protest as she told him that he must let her show him part of the house before calling a carriage for him. Indeed, she seemed almost as much distressed as he was himself; and for this his adoration of her was trebled.

She took his hand as soon as they were alone in the wide, white-tiled hallway, and smiled down at him.

"If you weren't so old and grown up," she said, "I'd make up for Mrs. Prendigast's rudeness by giving you a good kiss."

"I wish—I wish I *wasn't* so old!" he stammered.

She laughed in a queer, catchy way, and then, as angels and saints sometimes may, accepted the wish for the fact.

There was a bitter accounting in the little house on Cherry Street that afternoon. The returning wanderer's aunt met him with a strained, hurt expression on her sweet face that was more potent than any number of reproaches. In response to her gentle inquiries, he apologized for his absence from luncheon, and made a clean breast of the whole matter—with the exception of that incident that had to do with his age. Aunt began to weep softly into her black-bordered handkerchief before the infamous narrative was finished.

"I think Old Spotty has held you in his hands this day," she mourned. She knew the devil as "Old Spotty," although just why her nephew never un-

derstood. "You were *stealing* when you caught the fish in the Hillsbury pond. That Mrs. Hillsbury did not punish you only makes it worse. I am afraid she is not a very good woman. She used to be an actress!"

Ianthe's worshiper was smitten dumb by this revelation. Aunt, with her eyes shining holy condemnation—her soul is with the saints, I trust!—and her lips set like a sterner Pudicitia's, hinted at other matters too wicked for him to understand.

"Did Mrs. Hillsbury ask you to come again?" she asked at last.

He admitted, with a shameful joy in the admission, that she had.

"You must resist that temptation!" said his aunt. "I wish you to promise me that you will never speak to her, never look at her, never think of her, again as long as you live."

It was a terrible promise; he hesitated, torn with dissensions. Aunt sank to her knees and began to ask Deity to show him his duty; it was her last, most efficacious argument in matters of this kind. He promised, and gave way to an outburst of tearful despair. After returning thanks, the sweet-faced guardian of his soul told him that she thought it was his duty to go to bed then, in the middle of the day, and remain there, in supperless prayer and meditation, until God granted a new and better day. He obeyed as well as he could, but his meditations were not all such as would have pleased her; his prayers were forced and few.

It is hardly remarkable that good intentions, formed in the strained, customary way, should reach their proverbial destination. Ianthe's adorer really could not help thinking of her, and from thinking of her to looking at her was so short a step that two of the conditions of his promise were broken within a week.

He knew, as did every one else in the town, that Mr. Hillsbury came home from the city every day at four o'clock, and that Mrs. Hillsbury sometimes went to meet him at the railway station. Ianthe's worshiper, naturally

enough, was painfully interested in Ianthe's husband; and on the day when he broke the second condition of his promise he persuaded himself that the desire of seeing Mr. Hillsbury was all that kept him loitering along the maple-shaded road leading away from the station.

One of the Hillsbury carriages was waiting beside the station platform, but from his loitering place a block away he could not be sure whether it was empty or occupied. A strange punctiliousness with regard to the terms of his promise kept him from looking very closely. The train came screeching in, and Mr. Hillsbury alighted. There was a younger, taller man, in a high silk hat, with him. They hurried over to the carriage, the stranger removing his hat and extending his hand as he walked. Mr. Hillsbury mounted the box beside the negro coachman, the stranger stepped into the body of the victoria, and the two black horses, with their gilt harness trimmings a-glitter in the sun, came mincing up the road.

The watcher stepped behind the bole of a tree. He stared first, with a strange, conflicting tumult of feelings, at Ianthe's husband. Mr. Hillsbury was a small, spare, straight, severe man, with a drooping, grayish mustache and a forehead so wide that it gave his thin face a shape like a narrow V. His complexion—indeed, his whole expression—was metallic, gray, hard, determined, a little sneering. Looking at him, the spy shivered a little as with cold.

But the body of the carriage, coming into sight, eclipsed everything else in the world. Leaning back among the violet cushions, her face shaded, made mysterious, by a wide, drooping, black hat, altogether exquisite, lovely to distraction, was Ianthe of the Fishes. The stranger, whose silk hat dangled beside his knee, was turned toward her, talking to her, almost bending over her. The watcher saw the gleam of his white ear among his crisp black hair. His straight mustache, glistening like a crow's wing, cut across cheeks as smooth and bronzed as those of the

Roman soldiers in "Myer's History." And Ianthe was smiling up at him archly, entrancingly from beneath the brim of her broad hat.

It all passed in the space of a few seconds. The spy came from behind his tree, stiff-kneed, uncertain in his movements, like one just awakened from sleep. He was filled with bitterness beyond belief. What he had just seen, little enough in itself, was terrible to him; he connected the sight with all that his aunt had suggested of Mrs. Hillsbury as too wicked for his understanding. His aunt, grown person's way, had vastly underestimated his understanding. He understood too much; he exaggerated realities into grotesqueries that would have palsied her with horror could she have guessed a tenth of them. But bitterer than anything else was his realization of his own insignificant, impotent jealousy. Trees, brown-mottled road, sun-splotched houses swam around him. He seemed at the vortex of a whirling world.

What imaginings filled his sleepless brain that night even I can comprehend but imperfectly. Arson, murder, torture that would have shamed the Inquisition were the pleasantest of his thoughts. His passion gradually wore itself out toward daybreak, and a splitting headache that provoked quantities of herb tea helped him to forget it the next day. But it was several days before the world lost all its tendency to whirl, with his head in its vortex.

The Hillsbury estate lay on rising ground about a mile east of the village, in the pathway of the rising sun, the rising moon, and many rising stars. As Ianthe's lover lost the first bitterness of his disappointment he used to sit of evenings on the front stoop of the little house in Cherry Street and watch the steady procession of stars above the eastern hills where she lived.

Bit by bit, he put aside all of his knowledge of her except what he had gained that April morning beside the still water, when they talked of St. Francis and caught a pickerel. He loitered

tered no more on the road that led from the railway station. With a sort of lethargic resignation, he allowed the Ianthe *Piscium* of his memories to fall into a niche in his mental world but little removed from the niches of hamadryads and light elves. Within an astonishingly short time she became little more real to him, and little more interesting, to tell the truth, than the population of his mythologies.

Perhaps a month later, when the first wild strawberries were beginning to redden on south-fronting hillsides, he went berrying with two other boys of the neighborhood. They followed a little-used road for several miles north of the town, with scant reward in the way of berries. This assisted in the precipitation of a fight when it came time to divide the lunch. Although he was the largest of the three, he had the worst of the affair; they combined forces, and took an unfair advantage by coming at him from different sides. Finally, when the smaller had got a good start, and the larger, leaping from his seat on the boy's neck, had made after him, the boy was too tired to rise and pursue. They took the townward road, leaving him to the woe and reparative measures of the vanquished.

And here, with his shirt torn open in front, with his face grimed and raw from having been rubbed in the dirt, he had his last meeting save one with Ianthe of the Fishes.

Hearing the beat of horses' hoofs down the road, he rolled over and sat up. Ianthe flashed into view on a splendid chestnut hunter, and drew up so suddenly that her horse's feet raised little, swirling clouds of golden dust.

"Why——" she cried; and then, recognizing him: "Oh, is it really you? What on earth's the matter? Are you hurt?"

Her presence affected him much less than he had thought possible. He was quite calm.

"I'm not hurt," he answered, without recollecting the only unbroken clause of his distant promise to his aunt. "Just been licked by a couple of fellers. There were two of them," he

added, anxious to emphasize the superiority of the force before which he had fallen.

Ianthe broke into ringing laughter.

"You poor boy!" she cried, with her voice full of amusement and compassion. "What a sight you are! The little heathen—to treat you like that! I'll have Henry brush you off."

She motioned to her groom, who had stopped some fifty paces in the rear, and he started his horse forward. For some reason, the thought of such a service was unbearable to the boy. A certain condescension in her manner was partly responsible, no doubt; and, besides, her mere presence had begun to make him remember, to set up contracting sensations in his throat.

"No!" he shouted. "I won't let him touch me!"

Her face sobered instantly. She made another motion with her hand. The groom touched his hat, turned his horse, and went back to his former station.

Ianthe dismounted, slipping the reins over her horse's head as she did so, and came over in front of the boy.

"I truly beg your pardon," she said, softly striking the skirt of her gray habit with a little ivory-and-gold crop, "for laughing. It was thoughtless of me. Will you please excuse me?"

The defeated pugilist sat without answering, stolidly gazing at the ground between his knees.

"Or have I offended you in some other way?" she resumed. "I was afraid I had when you answered neither of the invitations I sent you. I thought perhaps you would like to hear Signore——" She mentioned the soft Italian name of a great baritone long since forgotten. "And he wished very much to hear you."

Varying emotions filled the boy too full for longer silence.

"Was he the man who came with Mr. Hillsbury," he asked, glancing up at her, "the Saturday afternoon after we caught the pickerel?"

"Why, yes. Did you see him?"

He remembered the sight too well, and resumed his ground gazing.

"He is coming again next Saturday evening," she said. "Would you care to come? He has a magnificent voice."

Ianthe's judge and lover made no sign that he heard.

"I wish you'd tell me," she resumed, after a short pause, "whether I've done anything to make you ignore me and my invitations. I sent the last one by a groom, to make sure it should reach you."

The boy was stung into self-defense.

"I never got 'em, nor heard anything about 'em," he blurted. "My aunt must have got 'em, and I guess she burned 'em. She says you—you are not a very good woman."

The little ivory-and-gold crop ceased its movement. After possibly five seconds of dead silence, the boy hazarded a glance up into her face, hoping and fearing that he had hurt her as she deserved.

Her face was perfectly calm.

"Probably your good aunt is quite right," she said, in a voice like a little silver dagger. "I beg your pardon for bringing the matter up. Good afternoon!"

She was back on her horse and far down the road in a cloud of golden dust before the boy realized that she had moved. Her groom, rising and falling to the trot of his hack, stared insultingly as he passed.

The defeated pugilist and disappointed lover trailed homeward with spirits as sodden as the dust he shuffled through. He made no mention of the roadside meeting to his aunt; nor did he blame her for doing away with his invitations. From the depths of his infamy—for had he not utterly broken his promise, and did he not adore Ianthe still in spite of all the evil he knew of her?—he looked up to his aunt as to some half-celestial being, who, by virtue of her daily admission into the councils of the Ruler of the Universe, could do no wrong. He was troubled, moreover, by a great problem, in which, as so frequently happens in great problems, right lay all on one side, desire

all on the other. His problem had to do with Ianthe's last invitation.

He had decided, in the course of his lonely walk home, to write her a note, apologizing for his rudeness, accepting her invitation for the coming Saturday evening. With a view to making his presence more pleasing, he had even stopped at the house of the choirmaster of St. Timothy's and borrowed a book of old songs and ballads. But when, after the evening prayer in his aunt's little parlor, he was alone in his own room, he could not bring himself to write the note. There were four days more, he reflected. He felt that he must not take so essentially wicked a step without mature deliberation.

In the four days that followed, his indecision of the first evening became a sort of precedent. A dozen times he determined to send the note; a dozen times, often with paper and ink before him, and a locked door behind, he could not bring himself to write the shameful words. In the meantime, he industriously picked out songs and ballads on the pedal organ in his aunt's parlor. Prompted by the turmoil in his own breast, he selected unhappy, romantic pieces, especially such as seemed applicable to the case of Ianthe of the Fishes and himself. When the fateful Saturday arrived, and with it the impossibility of getting a note to her in time, he had by heart half a dozen of the most plaintive songs in Scotch and English literature. Only by a great dissembling did he that day escape herb tea and castor oil.

After the early supper in the little house in Cherry Street, he took his cap and wandered forth. No definite purpose turned his steps toward the rising land to eastward; he merely plodded along the winding brown road, too chokingly full of disappointment, jealousy, unrewarded half virtue, all manner of bitterness to notice where he was going. In the course of half an hour he came out on a bare little knoll. He paused to look down upon the clustered brown roofs of the town behind him, and up toward the white-gabled Hillsbury house before.



Far to westward the sun was burning a blazing hole in the level prairie. Jags of parti-colored flame spread out and upward, as when a pine board is pierced by a white-hot iron. A long streak of gossamer cloud stretched, like a strip of rumpled white chiffon, above the pyre. The roofs of the houses, the steady spires of the maple trees that lined the village streets, the broad fields at his feet were ruddy with reflected glory. To eastward the many windows of the Hillsbury house blazed back the incandescent splendor, each one a separate dazzling plate of fire. A cluster of huge oaks before the estate's main entrance, some hundreds of feet from the mansion, was bathed in lambent rose madder and gold.

The boy turned his eyes again toward the dust of the roadway, and wandered onward. The sight of the giant trees, and of one in particular that rose head and shoulders above the rest, had put into his mind the beginnings of an idea. He knew the oaken patriarch well; the proudest moment of his twelfth year had come when, having swarmed fearfully up the bole of this giant, he had seated himself, with all the world beneath him, in a crotch below its very tip. The recollection of this exploit, no less than the present idea that it inspired, quickened his footsteps, set his heart to pounding at his ribs.

The sun had set by the time he attained the remembered pinnacle, but half of the great tree, including his airy perch, was still bathed in orange-colored light. Panting and trembling with the fierce joy of his ascent, he looked down into the fir-surrounded Hillsbury lawn. At first his sun-dazzled eyes could not pierce the lower shadows, but by dint of screening himself among the leaves and looking carefully he managed to make out several figures on the veranda.

He waited a moment to get his breath, to still the tumultuous clamor of his heart; then he began to sing.

He did not use the full volume of his trained voice at once. He felt even more strange and fearful than when his time had come to sing his first solo

at St. Timothy's. But the sound of his voice and the familiar words gave him courage.

"And every goose a swan, lad,  
And every lass a queen,"

he sang. It was a simple little song of two stanzas, a slight prelude to the weightier matter that was to follow.

Before the song was finished he saw his four listeners come out into the lawn. They gazed about curiously, now up, now about the shrubbery.

His time had come; he struck into "Loch Lomond." No one could have convicted his soprano of being soulless then. He was singing the song—he, in his own proper person—to Ianthe of the Fishes—to Ianthe of the April morning and the little blue lake.

"But me and my true love, we will never  
meet again,  
By the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond!"

Tears forced themselves into his eyes as he sang. He turned his face upward, and poured out his desolation, in a second and third stanza, into the opal-tinted depths of evening sky. Long afterward he compared his performance to that of a lost calf bawling for its mother; but any such comparison was at the nadir of his thoughts as he sang the quavering melody.

Upon glancing down, after sending the last yearning note toward the upper air, he noticed, with something of a shock, that his hiding place had been discovered. Ianthe and the Italian were standing close together, with still, upturned faces; Mr. Hillsbury was puffing a cigar some paces away, Mrs. Prendigast supporting herself by one hand on his shoulder. During the short interval before he began "Barbara Allen," none of them stirred.

He launched the new song in a melancholy minor, as suited the melancholy development of the theme:

"In Scarlet Town where I was born  
There was a fair maid dwellin',  
Made every youth sigh, Wellaway!  
Her name was Barbara Allen."

He forgot his audience with the second stanza, in the pathos of the song's

peculiarly apt application. Cruel Barbara was, of course, Ianthe of the Fishes; the rich man who inveigled her into marrying him was Mr. Hillsbury; and unfortunate Jammy Grove, who died for her—who but the singer himself!

The Italian burst into frantic gymnastics of applause at the conclusion of this sad recital.

"Bravo!" he bawled, waving his arms and legs like a very handsome and well-contrived jumping-jack. "Magnificent! Give us another! Encore!" He motioned to the others, and led the way down the white-graveled road to the foot of the tree in which the singer perched.

The singer was deeply disgusted by the attention he had aroused; but there was another song that Ianthe must hear. He felt that it was the most applicable of all to the state of her affairs. Unlike the others, it was a popular song of the day. It was called "She's a Bird in a Gilded Cage." I am unable to express the atrocity of this song; possibly it was, all in all, the worst song ever written. I remember only the last three lines of the chorus:

Her beauty's been sold  
For an old man's gold;  
She's a Bird in a Gilded Cage!

The singer tried to make of this song the splendid, tragic thing that—to him—it rightly was. He had not sung "Loch Lomond" with such melancholy; he had not sung "Barbara Allen" with such hopeless grief.

A curious constraint seemed to hold the audience upon the completion of this song. There was no applause. The sun, which had afforded the performer a sort of glorified spotlight, suddenly left him in darkness. His program was finished; he was tired; he wished to descend.

But, deeply as the former outburst of enthusiasm had disgusted him, it irked him to make his bow to a silent house. Luckily he bethought him of another ballad, learned years before. It was principally about a little cabin boy, who got drowned in the "Lowland

Sea." The singer launched it hurriedly:

"There was a gallant ship  
Went a-sailing on the sea,  
And the name of the ship  
Was the *Go-ol-den Van-i-tee!*  
And she feared she might be taken  
By the Turkish enemy——"

He stopped abruptly, for it seemed to him that Ianthe had called.

"Oh-oo!" she repeated. "Please come down now, and let us thank you."

Queerly enough, it seemed to the singer, she seemed to take it for granted that he had finished. He hesitated, perplexed.

"Do come down," she repeated. "See—it's getting dark. You might fall."

Mr. Hillsbury seconded her.

"Which would be too bad," he said, "considering your brilliant accomplishments."

The words, the thin, hard voice stung and astounded. The singer did not move.

"Come down now, won't you, please?" pleaded Ianthe. "Please come down!"

He hesitated only a moment longer, and then began a reckless descent. He had a dim wish that he might lose his grip and fall, a horribly mangled corpse, to her feet. Hatred of Mr. Hillsbury and love of Ianthe made his very soul sick unto death. He gnashed his teeth and tore at the bark of the tree as he slid downward.

When at last he stood on the ground no one took any notice of him. He stared dumfoundedly at his recent audience.

Mr. and Mrs. Hillsbury stood facing each other, straight and silent, some three feet apart; her eyes were level with his. The Italian and Mrs. Preadigast gaped astonishment.

"Madame," said Mr. Hillsbury, "kindly remember that I merely thanked you for your well-chosen entertainment." His voice was like a watchmaker's file—thin, hard, and harsh.

"And I repeat—that I had nothing whatever to do—with choosing this en-

tertainment." The breaks in her voice were terrible; the boy put his hand to his own throat.

Mr. Hillsbury smiled in a way that made the Italian take a sudden step toward him. "Then I must have been mistaken," he said. "Doubtless it was a mere coincidence that our young friend vocalized your misfortunes. Shall we return to the house? Agatha——" He offered his arm to Mrs. Prendigast.

Ianthe came over to the boy, sank down on one knee before him, and took his hands in both of hers. But he realized that she did not see him, or think of him at all. Her dead calmness terrified him.

"Don't—don't, dear Ianthe!" he stammered. Then she kissed him, and he felt that tears were running over her cheeks like rain over snow. "Now go away!" she whispered. "You understand? I love you—but go away!"

He understood only that he must do whatever she asked. He turned and ran with all the might of his trembling legs toward the town. He never even looked back.

The splendid Hillsbury house burned to the ground that night. It disap-

peared utterly in a great cloud of cin-der-jeweled smoke above, a great golden glow all around, and a great heap of gray ashes beneath. When Ianthe's lover was awakened by his aunt, toward two o'clock in the morning, half a dozen of the Hillsbury carriages were rolling through the village on the St. Louis road.

He was sent away to an Eastern preparatory school shortly afterward, and he never heard of Ianthe *Piscium* again. For a time even his memory of her suffered eclipse by the host of new interests and duties that beset him. But with succeeding years it returned in great glory. Gradually he conceived the notion that the burning of the splendid Hillsbury house might have been a symbol. Had not the house been her cage, her gilded cage? Was it not possible that his very singing had been the torch to set it on fire? He was deep in Maeterlinck at the time, and the conceit pleased him immensely.

To this day I never see the names of great singers without half consciously looking for hers among them. But doubtless she would have changed her name. And then, besides——



## THE HERETIC

THEY bid me pray within the templed gloom  
Of their great churches; bid me kneel  
At lighted, gold-strewn altars, lest the real,  
True splendor of the sun should leave no room  
In my dark soul, for fear of the dread doom  
They prophecy. They cry they would reveal  
To my blind eyes, my seeking hands, the seal,  
That holding blessedness, dispels all gloom.

And I, because I hate this imagery  
Of hidden, inward things that strangely lack,  
The soul's still faith; because so reverently  
I love the dripping, golden sun, the crack  
Of mystic dawn, earth's flowers, and the sea,  
—I sin—Yet God seems very near to me.

G. HERBERT.

# The Girl Who Never Grew Old



**C**HIEF ENGINEER MICKEY O'ROURKE was dying on a stormy winter's afternoon, while Light Vessel No. 188 rolled deep in the roaring seas that swept before the gale toward the Columbia River bar. One twisted and bruised hand lay over his crushed side; with the other he covered his mouth, so that only his eyes, bright with pain, told of his suffering.

"No, no, misther!" he was telling the captain. "Ye'll take no boat in this weather to fetch a priest for me soul's passing." He took his hand from over his lips that his words might come more plainly: "Sailors must eat what is helped, and the Good Mother above will be kind."

Captain Nillson wedged his huge form in the doorway of the little room and pondered. Overhead was the thump of falling water, the screech of the wind. Throughout the ship's steel frame sounded the incessant thin clamor of the submarine bell. The dying man breathed harshly.

"A doctor might——" the skipper began again.

Mickey's mustaches bristled. "And have me last pay check spint by anybody else than me own sither's childher in Oakland? Ye'll spind no money on *that*."

Now Nillson knew and Mickey knew that the chance of getting a boat across the bar into Astoria in such weather was so slim as to be no chance at all. But Mickey also knew that Nillson would take that chance at a word.

He smiled at the big figure in the doorway.

"I raymimber——" he commenced.

"Don't try to talk," Nillson urged gently.

"'Tis little time I have to speak," was the reply. "I was thinking of—of Tim, Tim Reardon. Tim had a love story. I have niver told it. To pass the time till eternity I will explain to ye why Tim, though he lived long and hard, and died alone, wid no woman's hand in his hair, was happy and in love till the end."

"Mickey!" the skipper said, in protest. "I wouldn't try to tell us."

"'Tis not for Tim's sake," the engineer answered, turning his bright eyes to the beams above him. "'Tis for the sake of the gir-rl who niver grew old."

Mickey wiped his lips with the edge of the blanket, and twisted himself painfully in the bunk. While the vessel he had tended so well through many years tossed wildly, and as if in agony itself, he told his last story.

Tim came from me own place, and his father's house stood on the slope of the same green hill as me own. A black-haired, quick-eyed felley he was, wid no woman's ways, and only the rough hands of him to make his rough path smooth. Maybe he dreamed. I dunno. At least he could niver explain what foolishness there was in his pate; and so he wint to sea, looking back across his shouldher as he stepped down the hill. But she—the gir-rl—didn't I speak of the gir-rl? No matter; there

was a gir-rl, and she merely looked at him as he wint by to be gone foriver.

The sea is no place to act without thinking or to speak without listening. So me bould Tim wor-krd with his strength many years before he found himself suddenly made engineer of a small tug. From that he rose by slow degrees to the lofty position of fourth assistant on a mail boat out of San Francisco to the Orient. Whin he got his ticket, he sat down and thought.

And the sum of his thoughts was this: "I am still sthrong, being but thir-rtly years old. I am unwed, and I have three pay checks still under the band of me cap."

Having thought this, he raymimbered the gir-rl who lived at the foot of his father's hill, the little gir-rl with bare feet, and childher's eyes out of which a woman looked. He repeated her name to himself, and wint below to his watch in the engine room with his chest out; and, by the power of raymimbering, he kept away from the dhrink and rose to be second assistant. He was transferred to another boat undher a chief engineer by the name of Dan Mahoney, a terrible felley, and proud of his ability to say little and look much.

When me bould Tim came aboard and repor-rted, Mahoney glared at him, and between their eyes wint the fire of distaste.

"Am I niver to get anything in me depar-rtmint but poor scuts, who can do little to ear-rn their pay?" says the chief.

"Such is the for-rtune of thim that deserve no better," says Tim boldly.

And they glowered at each other till the old man orderhed Tim to his duty.

Hatred is the life of the wor-rld. Thim that love each other may say nothing and be contint. But enemies must always be talking for fear their hatred'll die, and so disappoint thim. Because Tim Reardon and Dan Mahoney did not like each other, they spoke often and kept the fires war-rm between thim.

"The chief will niver let me go," boasted me bould Tim. "If I leave the

ship, he must sit alone in his room with no one to cur-rse."

"If the rascal were wor-rth it, I would instantly dischar-rge him," Mahoney would state with severity. "But nobody else would have such an ignoramus, and, as I have pity on him, I will give him bread and butter which should go to a better man."

Now, Mahoney lived in Alameda, across the bay from San Francisco, and each thrip he'd go solitary home without a wor-rd to the boys. But we knew why, for the pictures of his wife and daughter were on the bulkhead in his room, and the gir-rl was evidently too pretty for to be addressed by such as us.

Many is the time I have seen old Mahoney sit and stare at the gir-rl's portrait, his pipe cold between his lips, his hands gray on his knees. Did I say she was pretty?

Whin the good Lor-rd chose a mother for his Blessed Son, 'twas of such. She had the hair that should niver be touched but by delicate fingers, and her eyes looked at ye with trust and affection, and the call to be kind. Soft of flesh and silken of skin she was, and the cheek of her was dimpled into a hollow for the war-rmth of a baby's head—child, and woman, and angel! By the magic of photography, 'twas all down in the picture.

'Twas the portrait on the bulkhead that made us all wishful the chief would invite us to his house. Could we but see her sitting in a low chair undher the lamp, we'd ha' died happy. But niver a man of us was allowed to cross the bay and call, though many of us thried for the invitation.

So we were surprised at the gall of me bould Tim whin, one day, he looked at the chief engineer, who was most unreasonable that mor-nning, and said: "If it weren't for the sake of your sweet gir-rl, I'd lick ye for the wor-rds ye have spoken to me."

"Ye say?" said the engineer, with a white face.

"I say I would pound ye to a jelly, if it weren't that your daughter saves ye," repeated Tim.

And, be hivins, the old man wint away without a wor-rd.

Said a felley to Tim: "Ye're a wonderful lad. Ye've seen her. Are yez in love with her? How did ye meet her?"

"Be at no expinse to mind another's business," replied Tim, scowling at us all.

"She is, indeed, a sweet creature," says the felley, with all rayspect, but Tim answers him not at all.

At other times Tim would take chance, whin the old man was topside, to stare in at the picture of her on the bulkhead. One night I found him at the door, his eyes full of dreams. "I have done the chief a wrong," says he.

"Ye mean?" I demanded.

"After all, she is too good for the likes of us," says he.

"How did ye make her acquaintance?" I inquires, but Tim only tur-rned his eyes on me coldly.

Before long we saw that Reardon was making up to Mahoney. He no longer cur-rsed him aloud. He did many extra jobs. Each time we were nearing por-rt on this side he would dress up and make opportunity to speak. But Mahoney niver let up on him, nor paid any attintion to his efforts to be agreeable.

Me breath is shor-rt and me story long. I will pass over two years, during which Mahoney grew silent again, and me brave Tim wor-rked har-rd and said little. But we all knew he was striving for the gir-rl, and we stood aside, because in his eyes was the love of her.

One black night, as we were docking in San Francisco, with a sthrong ebb tide, and the engines wor-rking their best to get the ship into her slip, an accident happened. The chief engineer stood by an open side por-rt waiting for the machines to be rung down. His foot twisted on a coil of rope, and before he could get handhold or foothold, he shot out of the opening into the dar-rkness.

Tim was just coming along the main deck and, without a wor-rd, he wint overside after Mahoney.

'Twas bitter cold, and the tide was roaring through the piles and boiling out into the channel and to sea. In ten seconds we had heaving lines and lanter-rns ready swung down between the ship and the dock, and a boat lowering away on the other side to pick them up whin they wint past the ster-rn. But they were vanished, and neither look nor cry did we get from thim for two hours.

"No use," says the mate, after a while. "They have been sucked out into deep wather, and are now drifting with the dar-rk tide." And he hove in the boat again.

So we were astonished whin, about midnight, me bould Tim tur-rns up, with the ould chief, gray and weak, in his ar-rm. They said nothing whilst we helped the ould man to his room, and Tim went to his room for dhry clothes.

I wint in to see him. "How did ye manage it?" I asked him. "We tried for ye two hours."

"The old man sthruke his head when he fell," says Tim. "I found him rolling about in the tideway, and 'twas not till we were an hour in the wather that he came to, and we swam ashore."

"Ye're a brave man," says I.

"W'u'd ye leave the gir-rl without finder or father?" he demands.

Thin I knew that love in his heart-r was the strength of him. "Now ye'll win the gir-rl," I remar-rks to mesilf.

Next mor-rn, whilst Tim was at wor-rk in the engine room, the chief came down. He spoke to no one, but walked straight to me bould Tim, his hands behind his back.

"Misther Reardon, ye've saved me life," he says in a loud, hoarse voice. "I am grateful to ye."

"'Twas nothing," says Tim, looking him in the eyes.

"I did not think ye'd do such for an ould man," says Mahoney, staring at him har-rd.

"I did not," answers Tim.

And they looked each other fair and straight till the chief tur-rned on his heel and wint away.



"Bad cess to such!" says a felley near by.

"Tis his way," answers Tim, going about his duties. "It doesn't matther."

That afternoon I found Tim in his room, sitting on his chair and gazing at something. I saw that he was dreaming. I thrust me head in at the door to speak with him. But I did not. On the bulkhead above his desk was the gir-rl's portrait, the picture of Mary Mahoney. I wint away for an hour.

Whin I came back I spoke to him. "Ye have the picture, Tim."

"I found it in me bunk whin I came off watch," says he.

"Tis a sign," I remar-rks.

"Tis a sign," says Tim, and stretches the big ar-rms of him.

"The chief put it there," I wint on.

"Her father," he answers, with bright eyes.

"And now?" I inquires.

"And now——" he began and choked. I left him, knowing that his hear-rt was full.

Later I wint to the chief's room with me log book. The ould man sat with a cold pipe between his lips, staring at the empty wall, with the square of white paint standing out where the portrait had been.

"Here is the log, chief," I says ray-spectfully.

He answered me not at all, and I wint away, for his face was white with pain.

That night I got liberty and dressed mesilf up to go and see me sister, who lived in Alameda at the time. As I waited for the ferryboat, who should I come upon but me bould Tim Reardon, dressed in new clothes, and with a flower to his buttonhole. He was looking like a man who sees nothing. I touched him on the ar-rm. He tur-rned and stared at me a moment, and then he said:

"Where are ye going, Mickey?"

"To Alameda to see me own bor-rn sister," I answers him. "And what is the flower in your coat? Is it a sign?"

"It is a sign," says he, the eyes of him war-rm and bright.

"Ye'll see her?" I inquires.

"The chief has said so," he replies.

"Thin ye've won her?" says I.

He whispered: "I wondher will she have me? I am not fit even to speak to her. Mickey, I'm afraid!"

I looked at him, and saw that he spoke thrue. 'Tis the way of men to be afraid whin 'tis all over. So I stood beside till the boat was in and the gate opened. Then I took him by the ar-rm and we wint aboard.

'Twas the longest thrip ever made by a fast ferryboat to Alameda Mole. Me bould Tim said niver a wor-rd, but sat and stared at the dar-rkness outside. Whin we landed and were in the train, he said: "We will get off at Central Avenue."

"You will, but I will not," I remar-rks. "Me station is High Street."

"Will ye desert a shipmate?" he demands.

"For why should mesilf go with a lover to see his sweethear-rt?" I inquires, mad with him for his slackness.

"Come with me as far as the door," says he. "I have niver met her mother."

"Nor have I," I retor-rts.

"The chief will not be there," he wint on. "Shall I have no man to give me me face before the two of thim?"

"Tis the gir-rl and not her mother that counts," says I.

The boy groaned. "Come with me or I'll niver be able to knock at the door," he pleads with me.

"Rather than see the gir-rl disappointed afther waiting so long, I will ring the bell for ye," I assents. "But shame on ye, Tim Reardon, for a pol-throon and no lover at all, at all."

So we got off at Central Avenue, undher the bright gas lamps—'twas many years ago, and no electricity in the streets—and he tould me the address. As we went towar-rd it I could feel the ar-rm of him swelling against mine, and I pictured to mesilf the sweet creature opening the door and looking at him from her gentle hear-rt.

We found the house, a small cottage set back in a small yar-rd. There was a light behind the transom, and we could read the number plainly. "Ye're

expected," I told him. "Go on alone. I will go and see me sister."

"Ye'll come with me," he says, in a commanding voice. "I leave it to you to introduce me to the mother whom I have niver met."

So I rang the bell and waited behind me gallant Tim till the door should open. And I resolved that if the gir-rl stood in the light, I would disappear and leave them to their happiness.

We hear-rd steps coming slowly down the hall. Tim took off his hat. An ould lady opened the door and looked at us gently, with no wor-rd for us. I waited for me companion to speak, but he was dumb.

"Is it Mrs. Mahoney, ma'am?" I says, with me best bow, to help the poor divil out.

"It is," says she. Then she brushed two thin hands down over her skir-rt. "Are yez from the ship?" she inquires. "This is Second Assistant Reardon, and I am Thir-rd Assistant O'Rourke," I told her politely. "We came to call."

She stepped back and we wint in. "Where is the chief?" she asked in her quiet voice.

"He couldn't come, owing to wor-rk to be done," I managed to explain, and would have gone at the moment, but that she took me hat.

So we removed our coats and hats, and waited for her to open the parlor door, which she did slowly. We entered a little sitting room, furnished as women do such things, and there we sat down. Mrs. Mahoney sat down herself, very silently, on a stiff chair by a closed piano, and gazed at us politely, with her white hands folded in her lap.

I hear-rd no sound in the house. None of us said anything at all, and I cur-rsed meself for coming and being there. What business was it of mine?

Presintly me bould Tim, with a foolish smile on his face, pointed to a photograph on the marble-topped table that was undher the lamp.

"Why, there's a picture of Mary," says he.

Mrs. Mahoney looked at him with an odd expression, much as to say, "And how do you know?"

I took it up. "And a very good portrait it is," I remar-rks.

"Yes," she answers. "A very good likeness."

Me bould Tim looked suddenly happy. "Beautiful," says he. "And how long ago was it taken?" He walked to the table and picked up the picture. "'Tis an enlargement like the other," says he.

"Yes," she replies.

"I see that it was taken in Boston," Tim goes on.

Mrs. Mahoney once more smoothed her skir-rts down and said, in a dull voice: "Yes. 'Twas there she died."

No more was there said for a full five minutes. Then Tim spoke up in a far-away voice: "I think—" He got no fur-rther, but stared at the portrait.

"She died nine years and eight months ago," says Mrs. Mahoney, raising her tired eyes to us. "The picture was taken when she was eighteen. She died that year. We couldn't live in Boston after that, so we came West."

Very quietly, Tim got up and held out his hand, saying nothing.

The ould lady spoke up. "Say nothing to me husband about Mary," says she. "He cannot bear to speak of her. She died of pneumonia while he was at sea." She smiled dimly at us. "Me own name is Mary, but he can't call me that for choking."

We wint out, through the little yar-rd, and down the street. We waited for the train, and we wint together back to the ship. There, by the door of his room, I left Tim Reardon, and then wint to me own room.

As I passed the chief's door, I saw him inside, sitting with a cold pipe in his mouth, the gray hands of him on his knees, the eyes of him bur-rnt with pain for the gir-rl he had twice lost.

Next day me bould Tim quit the ship and disappeared for many years. I saw him once in a while, and he kept the portrait of the gir-rl always with him. Maybe he was a bit crazed by his sorra. At any rate, he niver seemed to think her dead. One day I met him on the old *City of Puebla*, where he was assistant. I stopped in for a yar-rn, and

saw the picture on his bulkhead. Afther many little things I pointed to it. "Ye still keep it?" I inquired.

"No one can iver take her away from me," says he. "Her father gave her to me. I have lived har-rd and wrong in many things. But whin I see her, I can look her in the sweet eyes and hold out clean ar-rms to her. 'Tis long to wait," says he, "but she niver grows ould, and so—what matther?"

I have tould the story of Mary Mahoney, the gir-rl who niver died, who was immor-rtal because she was loved and protected, and niver hear-rd rough wor-rds, nor saw rough deeds, nor wept because of a wicked wor-rld. And now I have finished.

Mickey looked at us all brightly, his hand once more over his twisted lips.

The skipper laid a gentle hand on the bruised arm. "I will get you a priest."

O'Rourke shook his head. "No! I would die alone."

We made him as comfortable as possible, and went about the duties of the evening. When the lights were lit and shining into the murk and storm, the watch set, and the jumping cable freshly stoppered, we went back to the cabin.

Under the swinging lamp above his bunk, Michael O'Rourke lay dead, all pain wiped from his face. Nilsson started to pull the blanket up over the gray head. Something tumbled out to the deck. I picked it up. It was the photograph of a young girl, evidently taken many years before. Out of its crudity shone youth, and tenderness, and loveliness as we gazed at it by the shaking light. The skipper took it gently in his hand, looked at it, turned it over, read the writing on the back, and then said in his steady voice: "This is the end of Mickey's last story. This is the portrait of Mary Mahoney."

We left him with the picture over his heart.



## THE AWAKENING

WITH trumpet call prolonged and loud—  
The strange March wind leaps past,  
While here and there the withered leaves,  
Like rags from Winter's tattered sleeves,  
Are fluttered by the blast.

The Spirit of the sleeping earth,  
Is loath to leave her bed,  
Through blanket clouds pulled all askew,  
The March wind shows a speck of blue,  
And shakes her pillowed head.

Half stirring in her sleep she sees,  
Before her dreamy sight,  
A morning dress all green and new,  
Bedecked with flowers gay of hue,  
And cap of blossoms white.

Now high and clear a sweet note sounds,  
Borne on the wind's wild roar—  
Awakening with joyful spring,  
She says "I hear a bluebird sing."  
And opens wide the door.

EVELYN H. HAWORTH.



"I am half sick of shadows," said  
The Lady of Shalott.



WON'T!" said the little princess. "Do I have to?"

Which showed that she did not grasp even the rudiments of rebellion.

"Certainly," the English governess replied, without so much as looking up from her book. "Say it all over again. Come!"

So the princess said it all over again, watching the shining line of pink skin that went straight along the middle of Miss Chipswith's head, dividing it into two equal parts.

"Thank goodness *that's* over!" she remarked at the end of the lesson. And she threw herself into a chair with a protracted yawn.

The chair was deep, and the princess' spine was limply thrust into its recesses; her chest had hollowed itself; her hands were on the arms, the long, slender wrists protruding from lace cuffs; her frock was hitched up, disclosing both thin, black-silk-stockinged legs from above the knees; her patent-leather slippers showed worn places on the inside, from the rubbing together of her feet. The princess always worked her feet when she was studying; it helped her processes of thought.

Miss Chipswith pretended not to notice her pupil's abandoned attitude. She had found it wise to overlook things about seven times out of ten.

"Now you may play!" she said, in a

tone as nearly riotous as her range allowed. "I shall return in half an hour."

The heavy door closed behind her, but the little princess did not move.

"Play!" she exclaimed aloud—a habit of hers—"huh!"

Outside spring had come, but in this remote palace, whither the court had moved for the first time in many years, there was so much upholstery that the spring could not get by it.

The princess presently arose, stretched her arms up over her head until her finger tips tingled, and went to the window. She had a fleeting impulse to go out, but to do so would involve endless effort. By the time she had summoned a page and sent him for the governess, who in turn would ring for the maid, who would bring her highness' coat—the outgrown velvet one, which was good enough for the country—and her hat, with the sweeping white feather, and her nicely cleaned gloves, and her overshoes—for the earth was fresh, and brown, and oozy—the hour for her music lesson with Professor Davinsky would have arrived. It was far simpler to stand inside, untwisting the silken strands of the cord that moved the French shade up and down—though it would be quite impossible ever to twist them properly up again—and see what she could.

The first thing that she saw was the queen going out for her drive. The queen looked very white and tired, and there was no smile in her eyes. So there was no smile on the features of

the lady in waiting who accompanied her and held her wrap. A little behind them the footman stood, without so much as a tremor of the cockade on his hat. The beautifully burnished horses, who should have been champing at the silver bits, did not champ at all, for they had taken this same drive six times already, and knew exactly what to expect. The princess drummed on the pane, waiting impatiently for the royal equipage to move out of her view. She was not interested in the queen's drive. While she was wondering what would come next, a low voice at her elbow inquired deferentially:

"Please, your highness, shall I make up the fire?"

The princess turned and confronted a six-foot flunky in knee breeches, with white stockings clinging close to his shapely legs, his huge chest plentifully ornamented with gold braid. In his immaculately gloved hand he grasped a rusty iron poker.

"Whew!" sighed the princess, "it's hot enough now! Don't you think so? But if they told you to make it up, I s'pose you'd better."

"Yes, your highness," said the man.

Softly she followed him to the great graystone fireplace, where the embers were dying.

"Let me poke it!" she cried wistfully, when he had put on two great logs. "Oh, William, I'd love to! If you go near it, you'll spoil your stockings. Look how you've dirtied your gloves already! And all that braid'll get in your way again."

The big youth colored to the roots of his hair. Awkwardly he wavered, not knowing what to do.

"Never mind," said the princess sorrowfully. "They might scold you if you let me. I didn't think of that. But I did want awfully to poke something!"

When he had gone, with laborious, stealthy steps carefully calculated to avoid making a noise, she stood uncertain. She considered visiting her baby brother in the nursery, but decided against it, for she was never allowed to hold him because he was heir to the throne, and the nurse said that he must

on no account be dropped upon the floor. Half-heartedly she went back to her post.

"Probably not a single thing'll come by!" she despaired. "There's lots more to see in the winter at home!"

Nothing did come but Professor Davinsky, who had been brought along from the city, and who had just walked up from his lodgings in the village, a black roll under his arm, his dun hair waving poetically in the breeze. Looking up, he made her a very low bow, and because he possessed the artistic temperament, was conscious of a distinct acceleration of the pulses.

The little princess was standing in the frame of the great window, a deep collar of Venetian lace, yellowed by time, contrasting with the live whiteness of her rather long, swanlike neck. Her dress of dark velvet clung about the meager, childish lines of her body, a bright, broad sash catching the folds of the material far below the waist. Her cheeks glowed with the shy, elusive, yet vivid tinge of the wild rose that he had but just passed growing in the warm hedges; her eyes, gray, brown-rimmed, were wide with unasked questions; and questions, too, were in the delicately penciled, ever-lifted brows. It was a face to make one laugh, and cry, and go mad with the summer madness that overleaps, in its joy at the eternal womanly, the man-built obstacles of title and of rank. The little princess, having no idea that her face was dangerous, waved heartily at the poor professor who had come toiling up the hill.

"It's too bad he has to teach me," she thought regretfully. "But it's not my fault if there's no music in me."

Which showed that the princess did not know herself, for there was plenty of music in her; only it was not for Professor Davinsky to bring it out.

The day dragged on till nearly six, and then the princess began to watch the clock.

"You're not attending!" said Miss Chipswich, who was reading a story aloud.

"Mayn't I go now?" was the answer. "It's nearly time."

How those long, black legs could fly, once they were allowed to stretch themselves! Along vast, vaulted corridors the princess scampered, and fairly threw herself against one of the countless doors.

"Come in!" cried a welcoming voice. And the princess burst in.

"Oh, mother!" she exclaimed. "Mother! Mother!"

A beautiful young woman was seated on the floor, trying to pin up her hair.

"He pulled it all down!" she said, her eyes full of laughter. "The little wretch!"

Upon a wadded quilt, with his fist in his mouth, the heir was sitting in solemn contemplation of the havoc he had wrought.

"Can't I hold——" began the princess, but was interrupted by a knock.

"Hush!" the queen admonished, getting on her feet with great celerity. "The nurse! It would never do for her to catch me like this."

A moment later the second most important personage in the kingdom was bowing herself out, walking backward, a protesting infant in her arms.

"She nearly bumped into the dressing table!" the princess giggled. "I should think she could feel where the door is by this time!"

The queen held out both arms wide.

"Oh, Toodlums!" she whispered, burying her face in the billows of her daughter's hair. "I've had such a boring day! Have you?"

The princess nodded as best she could, all caught up as she was.

"I don't know anybody in this place," she said; "not even the gardeners. Come to my room to-night! When I'm in bed."

"I can't to-night," the queen sighed. "There's a banquet. We'll have to talk it over now."

"But there's so much!" the princess demurred. "And we've only half an hour."

The queen looked at her.

"That's not enough," she replied. "I know it isn't. Well, perhaps I can come for just a minute, if I scramble getting dressed."

The princess nearly strangled her mother with her long, lithe arms.

"Do scramble!" she cajoled. "Oh, do! do!"

"I'll try," the queen promised. "But you know how slow Princess Hapsburg-Gotha is. I thought she'd never get my bodice hooked for luncheon. She's so nearsighted, poor thing!"

"Do you have to have her?" asked the princess commiseratingly.

The queen nodded. "Have to," she affirmed. "There's no way of getting out of it."

"Poor mother!" sighed the little princess. "I know how it is."

"No, you don't!" cried the queen. "You mustn't!"

"Don't I!" returned the princess, laughing. "I should just think I did! Why, the only peace I have is when Miss Chipswith goes to her room. I'm sure she sits with her watch in her hand the whole time she's there, for fear of being late getting back. What do you think she said when she found me looking out of the window to-day?"

"What?" asked the queen, playing all the while with the princess' hair.

"She said she was surprised," returned the princess. "That's what she always says. She told me never to do it again. Some one might see me. I was making myself common."

The queen's face grew grave.

"Did she say that?" she asked.

The princess, noticing the effect of her words, felt a faint stirring of compunction toward her governess.

"She was only trying to do her duty," she said. "She's dreadfully conscientious, you know—I suppose because she's a canon's daughter. Probably she was taught that way at home."

"I wonder how long it is since she's been at home," mused the queen.

"Ever so long!" answered the princess.

"That's not right, Toodlums!" the queen returned, with decision. "I think Miss Chipswith ought to have a vacation."

On the very first day of Miss Chipswith's vacation, a Saturday, the queen



was walking in her spring garden, full of the very earliest flowers. She had just time, between a visit from the manicure and the moment of dressing for a diplomatic luncheon, for a sniff of sweet, blossom-laden air. Her broad-brimmed hat was in her hand, her forehead bare to the sun that turned each thread of her hair to shining gold, and her eyes were full of unsolved problems, when, at the end of one of the pebbled walks, she caught the shimmer of a starched gingham frock that matched the newly flowered shrubs in hue. Presently a little girl came skipping down the pebbled walk, a basket in one hand, a big pair of garden scissors in the other.

"Good morning!" said the queen.

The little girl had stopped short, awed at this vision, but when it addressed her thus, and smiled, she took heart, and made a low curtsy.

"How well you do it!" the lady said. "You must have practiced it a long time."

"No, ma'am," the child replied. "Not so long. They teach it to us in school."

"What for?"

The little girl dropped her voice. "In case we should ever meet the queen," she said impressively. "So we'd know what to do. We began last winter, when we heard she was coming."

"You're very likely to meet her," said the lady—"in this garden."

"Oh, no, ma'am!" said the child. "Father takes care I shall be out of the way when she comes. But he lets me help him other times, because I love the flowers so. He's the third gardener. Saturdays and Sundays I'm here most all day. The flowers is company for me."

"Haven't you any sisters and brothers?" the lady asked.

"Yes, ma'am," was the reply. "But they're grown up. I'm the only little one."

"Are you lonely?"

The child shook her head. "I've the flowers, and all the other children in school, and lots of things to do to help mother, when I'm not helping father! I've no time to be lonely!"

The queen regarded her intently. The brown eyes were bright and serious; the face not without beauty—sweet, fresh, and wholesome; the long, brown, well-tended hair hung down in two braids tied with pink bows. Here was an unexpected solution.

"I know a little girl," said the queen, stooping and taking one of the child's hands with an eager gesture, almost pleading, "who would love to play with you!"

"Do you?" responded the child, wide-eyed. "A little girl like me?"

"Yes," the queen went on. "Like you. Just your age. But she is lonely. She's never been to school."

"Not been to school?" said the little girl, incredulous. "And as big as me! Maybe she's half-witted?"

"No," smiled the queen. "She has a governess."

"Ma'am?" answered the child, and added, puzzled, "I never heard tell of governess."

"Never heard of governess!" rejoiced the queen inwardly; "just what I want!" Aloud she asked:

"What's your name?"

"Celia," was the reply.

The queen sank down on her knees on the pebbles, and, taking the child's other hand, looked up into her face.

"Don't you want to come up near the palace to-morrow, Celia?" she suggested. "It's lovely there, on the lawn. Come right up under the big front windows and wait. The little girl I was telling you about is sure to come out. It will be such fun!"

The child shrank back.

"Father'd never let me!" she protested.

"I think he will," the queen answered, "if you tell him I asked it as a favor."

"But—" said the child, and dared not finish.

"That's so!" said the lady; "you don't know who I am! Never mind, just tell your father that you were properly invited by the mother of a lonely girl." And she was off down the path between the hedgerows, her garden hat swinging at her side.

The next morning, Celia was standing

uncomfortably on the cropped grass at the appointed spot, her hands clasped upon her stomach, gazing at the huge, turreted pile before her, with the unhappy glance of a scared fawn. She felt utterly out of place, and it was a new and desperate sensation. Details did not exist for her, so she did not see the princess, who was at the window, according to her habit, with no one to say her nay. Presently, the immense front door swung slowly open, disclosing on either side a splendid gentleman with hand at forehead and elbow crooked outward. Celia neither understood the salute, nor saw what it was that they were saluting, so quickly did it flash forth.

"Wait a minute!" cried the princess, out of breath. "Oh, don't go away! I was so afraid you would, before I got down! There are hundreds of steps."

Not knowing what to do, Celia be-thought herself of her curtsy.

"No! No!" the princess begged, her eyes full of apprehension. "*Please* don't begin those tiresome things! You'll waste all our time. What shall we play?"

Here was a practical question that Celia could understand. "Tag?" she suggested.

The princess deliberated. "It would not be very exciting, with only two," she said. "I tell you what—we'll act."

"Act?" asked Celia.

"Yes!" the princess answered. "I've just been reading a story about a princess and a ragpicker's daughter. It's *very* exciting. Let's act that!"

"All right," Celia acquiesced. "You be the princess."

"Oh!" the other protested, in dismay. "If you don't mind, I'd *much* rather not!"

Celia gasped. "Rather not be the princess?" She could not believe her ears.

"You do it!" cried her new friend, jumping up and down. "You be her!" She was too interested to bother with grammar.

"Me a princess?" Celia cried, shaking her head. "I never could."

The princess flung her soft arms

around the other little girl's waist. "Yes, you can," she encouraged. "It's easy! I'll show you. Why, I'm *sure* I can be a ragpicker's daughter! All you've got to do is to *feel* like it. Can't you feel like a princess?"

The gardener's child was watching her in round-eyed wonder. New vistas, bathed in mystic light, were opening beyond her horizon.

"I don't know," she answered, and added gamely, "I'll try."

The princess clapped her hands, and then gazed furtively up at the windows.

"Don't let's stay *here*," she said. "Some one might see me. I was in such a hurry that I didn't put on my hat and coat!"

"It's quite warm," said Celia, wondering.

"I know," was the answer, "but that's got nothing to do with it. You'll find out, after you've been a princess once or twice!"

"How do you know?" Celia returned. Then she went quite white. "You're not—you're not—" she stammered. "The lady didn't say— And father didn't say—I thought—"

But the princess was not listening.

"Come!" she said. "Let's begin. We'll play among these quince bushes. You're a real, grown-up princess, you know—not a little girl that has to obey. You're going to a court ball, with a pearl coronet in your hair. You're walking along like this, tall and stately, when, all at once, the ragpicker's daughter—"

Their piping voices trailed off into the shrubbery, but not without stirring up the little birds, who started to chirrup among the treetops, continuing the game among themselves.

That afternoon there was a conference in the spring garden between a lank man with kind eyes and begrimed hands, and a lady with bright hair and a wistaria-colored parasol over her shoulder. For many minutes the two stood motionless, in absorbed conversation. Then they parted with smiles.

The next morning, when school

opened, there was a new pupil on the girls' side of the aisle. Celia had led her up to the teacher. Celia was holding her tightly by the hand. "My cousin," she had murmured. The new child was dressed in a neat print frock, her heavy shoes were well blackened, and her hair was braided. She sat very straight, and all during the session the teacher was conscious of her eyes upon his face.

"She looks as if she knew everything," he thought. "I must find out how to grade her. I'll try."

It was during the geography lesson that he addressed her a simple question as to the source of the Yalu River.

"Er——" said the new pupil, startled. "Ah—I don't know."

Twenty hands went up, waving frantically. One boy, shirt-sleeved and collarless, rose half out of his seat. His lips and cheeks burned scarlet, his eyes snapped. He held back with difficulty the words that rushed to his lips. The princess looked at him in genuine wonder. She had entered into her mother's idea of going with Celia to school as into a new game. Here was a little peasant coming to school, not as to an amusement, or even an occupation, but as to the fountain of the water of life. She thought of her own hours with Miss Chipswith, of the books, dog-eared and despised, that she had twirled in her hands, counting the minutes until she could clap them shut. To her, too, in the twinkling of an eye, new vistas had begun to open up.

"Well?" the teacher encouraged the boy.

And the princess felt deeply humiliated, not because he gave the answer that she had been unable to give, but because she had stupidly despised and rejected that for which his whole being was so eagerly athirst. The teacher was looking at her again, disappointment upon his brow.

"The map is before you," he said. "I pointed out the place not two minutes ago. You were not listening. You may stay after school."

"I won't!" cried the princess, in her mortification. She was just going to add, "Do I have to?" But this unrea-

sonable educator did not give her an opportunity. A terrible stillness had fallen at her words. Not even a creak of shoe leather could be heard.

"You won't!" the teacher repeated slowly. "Children, here is a scholar who says she won't."

All the pupils thus invited to show disapprobation began to shake their heads, the girls with emphasis, the boys half-heartedly, because of the curious effect upon them of Celia's cousin's face. The teacher bent down behind his desk and emerged with a small wooden packing box, which he placed solemnly in front of the desk, before the rows of wooden benches.

"Stand there," he said, "where every one can look at you. You will remain five minutes."

At this awful decree, a low murmur went around the room, boys and girls alike half hoping, in delicious terror, that the rebel would continue her defiance. They did not know that she was not really a rebel, but only a little girl in unusual surroundings, who had lost her bearings like a cat in a strange garret.

For a minute, the princess remained in her seat. Then she arose and mounted her box. The teacher busied himself with correcting some examples, but every now and then he glanced up, disconcerted, at the back of the new pupil's head. It was very small and shapely, that head, and absolutely motionless. One of the braids had loosened, the ribbon was off, and the end had twirled itself into a curl. If impatience could have accelerated the motion of the hands of the big steel watch that lay before him, the punishment would have endured but half a second. He bore it for three minutes.

"I'll let it go at that," he decided, and said: "That will do," in a glad voice.

He felt unaccountably nervous all the rest of the day, and when he had dismissed his pupils, who tramped noisily out with their books in their hands, buried himself once more in his work, never ceasing until all the shouts beneath the windows had died out. Then he looked up and beheld the new little

girl, again motionless, sitting on her wooden bench. He cleared his throat and smiled. Her eyes met his gravely, but, to his great relief, he could read in their clear depths neither resentment nor defiance.

"Now we'll do it all over again!" he said.

The princess smiled back, thinking that there was not much difference in teachers, after all. Before five minutes had passed, she saw reason to change her opinion.

"Do you know what has been happening in Japan lately?" he asked.

"I've heard *something* about the war," she responded vaguely. "I've read about it."

"Yes!" he cried, "but do you realize that there are real men on that little dot on the map, who are fighting for their country, suffering, dying, parched with thirst, faint from tramping, now, on this very afternoon, while you are sitting here? Look!" he went on, indicating with his pointer. "Here a bloody victory was won yesterday. Right on that river that you didn't know anything about!"

"I didn't think of it that way," said the princess. "I never thought of geography like that. Oh, please go on and tell me more!"

They spent a thrilling hour in discussing the battle of the Yalu, ended by a tap at the door.

"Come in!" said the teacher, and Celia entered, with anxious face.

"Please, sir," she began, "mother says, can my cousin come now?"

The two girls ran together along the damp road, in their nostrils the sweet odors of reviving earth, in their limbs the fast-flowing sap of youth; and the eager, untrained mind of the little princess stretched itself and rejoiced because it had been given some concrete information to grapple with.

"We must hurry," Celia admonished. "They've been waiting for you ever so long. Mother was worried to death."

"Oh, but it was splendid!" cried the princess. "I had the best time!"

"The best time—being kept in!" Celia did not understand, or pretend to

understand, such ideas. She knew, however, that up in her tiny bedroom they had been kept waiting indefinitely to put upon her friend marvelous habiliments suited to her station.

"Come in while I dress," said the princess, pulling Celia along.

Standing in her short petticoats, with the fine lace of her drawers peeping out underneath, the princess snatched from her attendant the rumpled print frock she had just taken off and pressed her lips against it as if it had been something alive.

"Good-by, you dear thing!" she murmured. "Till to-morrow. Oh, I'm so glad I'm going to school again to-morrow, and the next day, and the next!"

She did go every day that week. She worked like a beaver, and the teacher began to regard her as his most promising pupil among the girls. She was not up to his best boy pupil, Fritz, the stonecutter's son, he of the ragged shirt and the greedy eyes, but she was a close second. A friendly rivalry existed between the two, and the princess almost dropped dead with joy when, on the Friday, she beat this boy a full minute in obtaining the correct answer to a problem in compound interest. Oh, how red were her cheeks, how her eyes danced that afternoon! It was her happiest school day—and, alas! her last.

The fact of her identity had leaked out, no one knew how; the gardener's household had guarded the secret loyally; they would rather have died than betray it. Perhaps it was the fault of the princess' face, for being the sort of face that, once seen, is stamped forever on the memory. That night in her beautiful, white-enameled bed, she lay with her wet cheek against her mother's hand in the dark.

"It's perfectly horrid being a princess!" she sobbed. "It spoils everything!"

"Hush, Toodlums!" soothed the queen, wondering what a mother's ingenuity might do to prevent everything being spoiled that had begun so well.

On Monday morning, fully ten minutes before school, the district teacher

was sitting with his head in his hands. He looked worn and old, and there were hollows under his eyes. Years ago he had been full of ambition and of hope, which had lived and died in the little cottage that still sheltered the bed-ridden mother whom he had never found it in his heart to leave. Since fate had decreed that he must remain forever in one place, he had read and dreamed of things and people far away, striving passionately to bring them near to these children, in case life should prove for them as sadly narrow and circumscribed as his own had been. Let poverty grind their faces; it should not have their souls! Those he would wrest away from it by the force of his will. He had not been unhappy, for he had had something to give. True that the soil had not always been ready to receive it, but what did that matter? He could make it ready.

At last had come, as a reward for all his striving, a child whose questioning eyes had been the lamps of a rare spirit ill fed. Never had he dreamed of such joy as had been his the last six days, during which, exultant, he had dug, plowed, harrowed, turned over, and planted in the rich earth of that nature to his heart's content. Then, with cruel shock, he had learned that she was a star child, removed from him and his like by worlds and worlds of space. What had he done, fool that he was!

"I punished her!" he groaned. "I made her stand on a cracker box!"

He forgot that he had fed the hungry; given of his treasure to one who was in need. He would not have presumed to harbor such a reflection.

"I kept her after school. I made her stay in," he thought dully.

Just then the children came trooping past under the open window. In twos and threes they came; some who looked to him to fan the fires that burned within them; others, vacuous rustics, with whom it was his habit to labor unflinchingly day by day, believing steadfastly that he would at some moment kindle in them some gleam of good—all precious to him for one reason or another, big and little, boys and girls.

Sighing, he unrolled his creased map and took the marks out of his books. Shyly a little girl came up to him.

"Well, Cynthia!" he said.

"Here's a letter for you, sir," said Cynthia.

The master turned pale, and could hardly break the seal, for upon the envelope was a coronet. The letter inside was not very imposing. It was written in a round, laborious hand, and the lines sloped unmistakably downward.

MY DEAR TEACHER: Thank you for everything, even for punishing me, because that showed me at the beginning how to behave in a real school. I didn't really mean that I wouldn't, and I was so sorry I was rude. I shall read the papers every day about Japan, and the next time my father has a war, I'm going to ask him just where everything is. My father says that if Fritz wants to go to school in the city, he will send him. He says that if you don't mind teaching me the rest of the summer, it would be a good thing, because my governess is not coming back. I don't mind taking my lesson late in the afternoon, because the other children could never get on without you. I've had a beautiful week, and I shall try to learn everything you want me to. Your loving pupil,  
ELSIE.

P. S.—Please tell Fritz I did the next three examples in interest in five minutes. How long did he take?

While the letter was still fluttering in the teacher's trembling fingers, the round face of the watch on the desk showed that it was time to ring the bell. So he touched it mechanically, and all the pupils sat at attention. Just then a faint sound began to be heard outside, the distant tap of hoofs approaching. The teacher scarcely dared to breathe. He knew not what to expect. Presently a pair of horses drew up before the schoolhouse door, with a flourish that nobody saw because all were in their seats. The teacher caught the alert eye of Fritz.

"Open the door!" he ordered weakly.

Outside stood an imposing gentleman in a tall hat and frock coat, with a long, white beard. The teacher arose and went toward this personage with slow steps, as toward a lord high executioner. But the old gentleman looked at him pleasantly, and extended toward him

something red and gold, that glittered in the sunlight.

"His majesty has graciously deigned," he said, "to confer upon you the order of the Iron Eagle, Fourth Class, of the Division of Science and Education. It gives me great pleasure to be the bearer of this message, and to add my personal assurances of his majesty's regard."

The teacher stood before the lord chamberlain humbly, bereft of speech. All at once the venerable face faded

from his vision, and in its stead he saw a small and shapely head, cheeks that glowed like the wild rose, eyes gray, brown-rimmed, that confidently expected of him the answers to a thousand questions. He forgot the decoration with which he had just been honored by his king, and, eyes downcast, saw only the sprawling, slanting characters of the letter that he still held in his hand.

The star had come down out of the heavens and was shining in his heart.



## MARCH

OH, willful truant, fretful and unkind!  
 You jest at Winter and you mock at Spring!  
 With sunny smiles and gloomy frowns entwined,  
 You keep our hopes and joys upon the wing!

You drive the Winter's frayed battalions by  
 With gusty whip through uplands bleak and bare,  
 A ragged line that sees with wavering eye  
 Their wind-tossed plumes of snow melt in the air!

Across the sands and out upon the sea,  
 You toss the rocking billows' foam-fringed mane;  
 You part the clouds to set the sunbeams free,  
 Then lash the watery waste with whips of rain!

Oh, spirit of unrest! your changeful ways  
 Mar all the promise of your fleeting smile,  
 And bid us haste to welcome April days  
 With dreams of flowers our senses to beguile.

Adieu! thou spirit of unfaithful days!  
 To thee the parting word we gladly fling;  
 Thy fretful mien and unresponsive ways  
 Have more endeared to us the heart of Spring!

WILL LISENBEE.





# HER RIGHTFUL PLACE CONSTANCE SKINNER



**N**OW, of course, I'll do as you say, Lenore. I suppose I ought to call you Mrs. Kerloa in a professional matter like this, but I can't forget that it always was Lenore when I used to see you running by to school mornings; and even when you put your hair up, and Henry Perkins began courting you. I have the papers drawn up the way you wanted them, but personally I agree with your mamma and Sophia here. You should proceed against him for the true cause—and in his own State, where they call a spade a spade."

It was Lee Banks, the principal, and almost the only, attorney of Watertown, who spoke; and he spoke authoritatively.

Lenore Kerloa turned from the window, out of which she had been staring unseeingly, and surveyed the little group at the parlor table. She knew that it was impossible to make them understand her. There they sat in self-appointed council—her mother, Mrs. Houston, robed to her flaxen braids and her plump white chin in black, heavily trimmed with crape; Sophia Work, "Ellen Houston's poor relation," as Watertown called the spinster and deaconess who led so active a life in the Houston home; and Lee Banks, the lawyer, stout and florid and important, and plainly devoured with curiosity concerning the secret feelings and motives of his client. Well might Mr. Banks feel important, for a divorce suit was a sensation almost unknown in Watertown.

"It must be desertion," Lenore re-

peated quietly. "I have no proof of any—"

"Lenore Houston!" her mother broke in impatiently. "What proof do you need—with an actor? Besides, doesn't everybody know about Davis Kerloa and that Bertha Gene? Why should you protect him? A man who couldn't be absent from his wife one year, while she was in the house of mourning, but he must be carrying on with actresses in his company!"

"His foreign Polish blood has something to do with it, no doubt," Sophia remarked.

"Please!" Lenore silenced them gently. "Mr. Banks will tell you I have no proof that a court would accept charging—"

"That's why I want to go ahead and get it for you," Banks interrupted vehemently. "It wouldn't take me an hour, I'll wager."

"No. I won't have it. I will not put that stamp on Davis Kerloa in the public mind. I do not wish to injure him. I want only to separate myself from him and his life altogether. When I learned about Bertha Gene and—saw that he could replace me so easily—it all came to an end. But I am not going to tell the whole world about it. Please don't oppose me any more, mamma. You don't—you can't—understand. There's something about Davis on the stage—I always think of the first time I saw him—" Lenore paused. Her great blue-gray eyes deepened with memory; wistful desire passed for a moment like a tender shadow over her poetic face. "I will

not harm the actor. I wish the man could have been true. Perhaps if I had been a good actress—but I couldn't act—"

"Lenore! How can you talk so? You—a good actress! What a disgrace! Oh, I can bear any amount of painful publicity now to see you take your rightful place in Watertown again after that feverish, unnatural life." Tears of indignation coursed over Mrs. Houston's smooth, round, red cheeks.

"We all feel that way, Lenore," Lee Banks contributed. "And we have a hope, too, that before long we'll see you happily settled in a home of your own. Henry has been faithful. He's not forgot you."

"No, indeed, he hasn't!" Sophia's sharp tones were trebly emphatic. "And I should think Lenore would be *glad* to have a home that's stationary and one post-office address for her mail, after years of residing in a Pullman with a faithless actor—and everything having to be forwarded."

Lenore winced visibly, but her voice sounded as patient as before:

"I am not divorcing Davis in order to marry again. Watertown is going to be very much disappointed in me if it thinks that." Turning to the attorney, she continued: "It must be desertion—you can find out where he is very easily. And—let it be done as soon as possible."

Mr. Banks gathered up the papers and his hat briskly.

"All right, Lenore. You're the boss. I'll serve them on him to-night before the curtain—"

He stopped short, crimson. Mrs. Houston threw up her hands, and cried out upon him. Lenore's face blanched to the pallor of the white rose in her belt.

"Now you've done it!" Sophia snapped. "Trust a man to make an indelicate break like that."

"To-night! To-night!" Lenore repeated, staring at him. "How—"

"Oh, dear, after all our planning! My poor dearie!" Mrs. Houston wept.

"You—you mean—" Lenore began slowly, her lips trembling. For a mo-

ment she could not continue. "You mean—that—Davis is playing at the theater here to-night?"

"I believe it's for the best that she should know," Mr. Banks asserted, growing resentful under the sharp-eyed condemnation of the two elder women.

"Answer me, please—somebody!" Lenore's eyes questioned Banks pitifully.

"Yes, Lenore. That is why we are all so stirred up to-day on your account. He is on his way to New York with some new piece—"

"I see. Yes—of course. Now I realize that you have kept me from going downtown during the last few days. And the paper has disappeared before I could see it— Davis at the theater here—to-night!" Her voice failed her.

"We all wanted to spare you. What we feel is that you should sue for the true cause, and let him take the consequences he has brought on himself. But if you won't, then I'll serve him to-night when he arrives, or just before the show begins."

"Oh, no, don't do that—not *here*! No, no, don't argue with me, mamma—" as she saw her mother preparing for a contest. "I can't do that to him. It isn't necessary. Serve the notice somewhere else—as soon as possible—but not *here*—not to-night."

Lenore turned swiftly, and went to the door leading to the stairs.

"Lenore," her mother called sharply, "wait! Since you can't be spared, it is best that you should know *all* about it. It is very hard for your mother to tell you—"

There was one more than ready to spare the maternal heart.

"I'll tell her," Sophia interrupted eagerly, "that Bertha Gene is still with him! That's the main reason why we hid the newspapers from you—so you wouldn't know he had the brazen heartlessness to come into your own town and play on the stage with that woman, when he knows that you are here and must learn of it unless kind friends protected you."

Lenore's hands were feeling for the door handle, while she faced the three

whose intimate solicitude seemed almost harder to bear at that moment than the faithlessness of Davis Kerloa. She was pale, and the sudden lines about her mouth told of battle; but there was a revelation of beauty—if those present could have perceived it—in the dignified pose of her slender figure and the fearless directness of her gaze. Hers was never, strictly speaking, a physical beauty. Lenore's charm lay rather in a quality of "atmosphere," as artists term it, which made the observer oblivious to material defects. Even her large, soft, blue-gray eyes, lovely in themselves because of shape and depth of color, were secondary to the feeling of beauty and tenderness that they aroused in the hearts of those who looked into them. Bravely now they met the assertive, intruding sympathy of family and counsel—a "sympathy" that would not be satisfied—as Lenore well knew—until all Watertown was informed thoroughly on the subject of her martyrdom. She spoke to Banks; her voice was just audible:

"If you think best, you may have the notice served before Mr. Kerloa leaves town. The charge is desertion. I will not permit—any name to be used in connection with his."

"Lenore, wait a moment!"

Lenore may not have heard, for she was closing the parlor door behind her. The one squeaking step halfway up the stairs proclaimed that she was on her way to her room.

She heard Lee Banks take his departure. An hour later—gratefully—she saw her mother and Sophia on the short cut through the back yard to the meetinghouse; Mrs. Houston's veil and shawl erect and wind filled like the somber, full-bellied sails on a pirate brig as it makes off after a triumphant encounter. Lenore felt that her happiness had been, in a sense, pirated from her. Poignantly, but without resentment, she questioned: Had it been true duty that had kept her with her mother's grief and absent from her husband, and thus made opportunity for the unforgivable thing to come between herself and Davis Kerloa?

Lenore had been born in Watertown, and had lived there until her marriage, with the exception of the summer that she had spent visiting a girl friend in Albany. A cousin of the girl friend's was a member of a stock company there, and Davis Kerloa was playing a stellar engagement with the company. She had seen him first as *Hamlet*, and he had become the ideal of all her dreams. After six weeks of ecstatic acquaintanceship she had married him, while her family gnashed teeth and Watertown prophesied.

Lenore had been typical of girlish youth in the smaller towns when she had married Davis Kerloa, actor and alien, roving genius, who knew everything in life, and as artist loved all things in life. In the smaller towns life comes upon the young heart with a slow wonder, and not with a rush of little, prearranged events, as in the hurly-burly of the cities. There young maidenhood, having plenty of time to think, and little to think about, learns to dream. In the young girl's ancestry is the blood of many seeking, warring, dreaming, strange peoples—the blood that years and years ago leaped with a love that was the urge of her coming ere it was poured out by the soldiers of revolt and the pioneers for the making of peaceful little towns. She is beautiful, with a loveliness that is elusive, alluring, mysterious, because in her young dream the dreams of all races mingle and become one. Journeyers from the city stare, and ask "Who is she?" It seems so impossible that she should be the child of her parents, who have forgotten dreams and ancestry in the claims of cherry-preserving and mid-week meeting, the small, daily round of gossip, and the economies and bargainings that serve their middle-aged ambition to be "well thought of" and "well to do."

Instead of remaining in the little town to be shaped by it to the likeness of the little town, Lenore, at nineteen, had entered the coastless realm of Bohemia, hand in hand with her wandering genius husband, with his "foreign Polish blood"—coastless Bohemia,

stretching ever to the crystal blue of an imagined sea whose remote, singing waters are *Dreams Come True*.

She had entered it with the ethics and the standards of Watertown. More tangible stuff, these, than dreams are made of, ever demanding their reckoning. The ethics and standards of Watertown had called her back. The brief years of her marriage seemed to have slipped away from her during this long sojourn with her mother and Sophia Work, who had diligently observed all the written and unwritten codes governing periods and degrees of mourning. Watertown said that the widow now had nothing for the intensity of her affections to lean upon but her only child; and she leaned!

Lenore had stood, a patient prop, waiting for the maternal vessel to right itself. Not so had Davis Kerloa borne the separation. After the first two months his letters had come every day for weeks, demanding her return in terms that ran the scale from love's finest pleading to angry command. Whether he pleaded or ordered, the substance of his argument was ever the same—his need.

"I need you. I shall begin soon to prepare for the new play. You must be with me. I cannot work without you to tell things to. The papers have been good all along the route—excellent notices, but I did not deserve them. I can no longer give performances that satisfy me unless you are near." In this manner he had written her a hundred letters. Watertown argued that the selfish and imaginary needs of a play actor were not to be considered before the obvious claims of a grieving parent. Lenore had been governed by Watertown's ethics of duty. She had closed the door of sentiment against Davis Kerloa's pleading. She had closed it very firmly and hung crape on the knocker.

According to a report diligently spread and much credited by Watertonian moralists, Davis Kerloa had sought relief from solitude, and a little wrongful joy, in the society of Bertha Gene, who was as brilliant, light-heart-

ed, and ethicless as a bird of paradise. But he had not ceased his daily orders to Lenore to return until she had written to say that, thanks to the investigations of friends and family on her behalf, she knew of his evil-doing, and therefore would remain forever in Watertown, where stern duties claimed her, and where existed the only real need of her, as her mother's daily tears and crape attested. To this letter he had responded once only, and with great dignity, requesting an apology—a speedy apology, if she pleased—because he was beginning work on the new production, and needed both his peace of mind and his wife.

This evening as she looked out of her window over the large, rambling back garden, with its two great cherry trees and its tall grass and pale gray-blue bloom of hydrangeas, a fanciful speech of Kerloa's came to her mind, spoken in that garden on her marriage morn:

"I feel a little like some willful vagabond creature who has scaled a forbidding wall and despoiled a garden. I have uprooted you, and you belonged here—you tall, fair, blue-eyed woman flower, among your blue-eyed flowers. But I wanted you. I've searched for you in all the gardens of the world!" Yes, he had indeed uprooted her, despoiled the garden, and wounded the flower; and he was still gayly ranging the gardens of the world. She could imagine him, at that moment perhaps, receiving notice of the divorce suit with complete indifference, realizing even as she did that, with such opposite codes, they had never really belonged to one another.

Her meditations were rudely interrupted by an impetuous knocking and ringing and shaking of the front door on its spring lock. She ran downstairs, to throw wide entrance—not to her mother, returned, breathless, for forgotten glasses or book—but to Davis Kerloa. He was breathless, to be sure, but less from the rushing and pounding of his feet on the sidewalk than from the pounding of his pulses and the hot rushing of his "foreign Polish

blood." He gripped a crumpled long envelope in his hand. His black hair was tossed and damp from his haste. His eyes were dark with anger and wounding.

"Davis!" she exclaimed, and could say no more.

"Lenore, do you see that?" he cried, and waved the paper in front of her. "A most terrible thing has happened. I have been made very angry. It is even possible that I shall not be able to play to-night. A terrible thing! I came to tell you about it at once, for of course I understand that you know nothing about it. I will not believe that you know anything about it. That would be too terrible. Some enemy—I do not know what his grudge is—but he is using your name vilely against me in a hideous practical joke. A joke—a joke! I should laugh at it. But I cannot. It is in too bad taste."

"Davis—I do know—"

He would not let her speak, but rushed on pell-mell, his face quivering as from a sharp blow:

"You do *not* know, Lenore! How dare you say you know! You must forgive me for speaking so harshly—I am very much upset. I apologize *deeply*, but I cannot allow you to say you know anything about this dastardly trick. This paper says you—you, *my wife*—are suing me for divorce—because I have deserted you! What a shameful falsehood! I never deserted you. I would as soon desert Shakespeare! I mean—it is impossible. I let you come home to your mother because you said it was your duty. Of course, if it was your duty, you must do it. I could not interfere. But I thought I should go mad with loneliness and the need of you. No doubt that sounds extreme to you, but it is perfectly true. I could not study. I could not act. I wrote for you repeatedly, and still you did not come. Then lately you wrote something about never coming back, and leaving me for good—and other things that you *should not have said*. I supposed I had vexed you in some way, or you were teasing me, and I have waited for you to write

again and say you were sorry for that unkind letter. I dare say you did write, and the letter went astray."

Lenore was shaken by the tone of his voice. She had never heard it before off the stage. Though subdued now by a desperate, straining control, yet it had the tonal quality of *Richard* on Bosworth Field, or *Othello* in his anguish, which had set her a-tremble many a night in the theater, where she had wondered at and worshiped the power of the artist who, outside the theater, was a glad, eager, tender-hearted boy, and her husband. They stood as her opening of the door had placed them—he on the porch, she just within, and still holding the door open.

"I was going into my dressing room when a man gave me this. I do not know the man. I never saw him before. A very ugly, fat man—a most distasteful person, with whiskers and a red face. When I read it I had just one idea; it was to kill that man. I called to Noguchi to fetch me the knife from my dressing table—the one I stab *Carlos* with in the third act—then I started after the man. Noguchi refused. He hid the knife. I discharged him instantly. Of course I shall take him back. He knows that. He was quite right not to let me kill the man. It would have been a mistake. These are just the ideas one has when one is disturbed. Just as when you said you were not coming back. I understood, and paid no more attention to it. Lenore—Lenore, why do you not speak? Why do you not laugh at this silly paper—and take it from me and tear it up? See—there it is—"

He caught her two hands suddenly, and crammed the envelope, with its weighty contents, in between her palms. He smiled bravely through white lips, and pleaded silently, his dark eyes wide with a fear that neither pride nor prayer could hide.

"Tear it up, Lenore!"

Lenore sent up silent orisons to the gods of Watertown to aid her from glamour. The complete surprise of Kerloa's coming had unnerved her; it was not what she had led herself to ex-

pect of him during the past months of apathy in her home environment.

"No, no, Davis," she managed to say at last. "I mean it. We must separate. It is for the good of both. I can never accept your way of life now that I know what it is. I will not go where I must meet women like—like that. I don't understand how I *ever* could. I never belonged on the stage, either. You know that I played even the little parts badly. It has been a mistake——"

"Lenore, dear, I do not know what you mean. If you do not want to play little parts, you need not. A thing like that shall not make a lasting separation between us. However, if you are really seriously angry with me, and I almost fear you are, I will not insist on your tearing up this paper now. Tomorrow will do, after we have talked things over."

"No, Davis. Please understand that I mean it."

"Lenore, darling, it will be all right. But you must not detain me with arguments *now*. You see, I have not put on my make-up yet, and it is almost time for the overture. As it is, they will have to hold the curtain for me. I must go. I will cancel Herfordville to-morrow, and stay here with you all day, and make things clear to you."

"It will be useless."

"How dare you! How dare you! It will *not* be useless!" he stormed at her suddenly. "I will stay till you—till you consent to come with me. Yes, I mean that! I shall not permit you to visit here any longer. It gives you queer ideas. Although that sounds like a criticism of your mother, I cannot withdraw it. It is impossible that it could be good for *any one* to live for a whole year in a one-night stand. I forbid it absolutely. I have a right to forbid it, because I know more about the one-night stands than you do. I shall cancel Herfordville."

"It will be useless," she repeated.

His voice was husky and strained, but he had caught control of himself again.

"Then I shall cancel Madison—and

Schenectady. I will cancel *New York!* But I will have this matter adjusted properly. I must get to the theater now—if you will excuse me——"

He lifted his hat in his native manner of Old World deference and eighteenth-century dignity, which, with his serenely perfect speech and gentle courtesy, comprised much of Davis Kerloa's original charm. Then he turned swiftly and ran like a deer down the middle of the street.

Lenore's shaking knees would not bear her longer. She sank down on the doorstep. Her shaken thoughts perturbed her more than her shaking knees, however. She wanted to go to the theater! Desire awoke and called for the footlights again—the footlights, the road, and Davis Kerloa. She seized her sunbonnet from the hall table and fled to the meetinghouse.

The door stood open. Sounds of singing poured out into the warm September air. Lenore's frightened demand for worship began to slacken as the fervent discords of Sophia's strong voice assailed her ears. She hesitated, and then decided, for no reason, that she would wait until the hymn was over. The little street was deserted. All the godly were within. All the godless were lined up before Davis Kerloa's box office. She stood by the steps and wondered vaguely at the dumb, wrenching hurt that seemed to be all through her. Automatically, from long association, her mind repeated the words of the hymn with the singers within:

"If, on our daily course, our mind  
Be set to hallow all we find,  
New treasures still, of countless price,  
God will provide for sacrifice.

"The trivial round, the common task,  
Will furnish all we need to ask;  
Room to deny ourselves, a road  
To bring us daily nearer God."

Because she had intended to enter when the singing ceased, Lenore's feet mounted the steps even to the door.

"The trivyl roun' and the common  
taesk, my dear brethern and sisters  
will——"

It was the high voice of Henry Per-



kins' Aunt Lulu. She was beginning the recital of her "experience" in coming into grace with the most familiar line of the old hymn.

For one chaotic instant Lenore stood on the threshold of the little church, seeing the eyes of some of the congregation turned in her direction, and her mother's long, black, beckoning finger. Then feelings too long suppressed, perhaps never before comprehended, surged within and over her, flooded her, swept her away out of the safe moorings of the meetinghouse and the morally landlocked harbors of Watertown—out, far out, to the wide horizon, where mistily twinkled the luring lights—were they footlights?—of a new Orient, and the night winds held the cadences of an artist's voice.

Lenore stumbled madly down the steps, across the road, and raced through a neighbor's pumpkin yard in a short cut to the main street. She had a vague mental picture of a curtain rising on a scene that she might miss. She panted to be there. She was halfway to the theater before she was sanely aware that she had left the church.

Indifferent to the curious stare of the local ticket seller, she asked for "Mr. Kerloa's representative," and at her request was seated by that worthy in the last row downstairs. There she felt secluded. The audience was very restless; it had been kept waiting till eight-forty for the rise of the curtain.

The first scene of the new play was so masterly in its preparation for the entrance of the stellar character into the story that it held Lenore's gaze and thoughts in spite of the emotions that were quivering her physical being like the proverbial aspen leaf. Bertha Gene could act. Neither jealousies nor moralities could prevent Lenore from recognizing a rare artist in high comedy in the sparkling little creature with bright-red hair who was playing this scene—on which the effectiveness of Kerloa's entrance depended—in such a manner that had Kerloa been the worst actor on the road the audience must have risen to him the moment he

appeared. Lenore could not ask herself if sentiment for the man was in any degree the motive of Bertha Gene's playing of that scene. She knew without asking that the only motive for such work was that Bertha Gene was an actress—what Kerloa called "the real stuff"—that first and always.

When Kerloa entered, Lenore received a shock for which all her experience with him had left her unprepared. He, the artist, who had always been supremely dominant and self-mastered on the stage, moved like a man in a dark room. His lines almost escaped him. He felt for them desperately. His voice had the tones that had so shaken her in their doorstep scene of an hour ago. It seemed to her that she could feel in every muscle and nerve of her own body his agonized straining for concentration.

This anguish and battle of the man, showing through the painted visage of the rôle, struck fear to her heart, because it proved to her how mighty and merciless was her own power over his emotions. As artist he had been so secure, so self-complete. She had adored him humbly, as one in a valley lifting eyes to the hills. Now to find that she could strike him with weakness at his work both thrilled and terrified her. Watertown was only a one-night stand, and it did not matter greatly if he gave a bad performance. What mattered was that his art was vulnerable to a woman—to her!

Her love flooded to him in a great mothering of tenderness. All the qualities in her that Kerloa loved, and on which he had relied in all the troubled moods of his temperament, rose to serve him. She felt that she must let him know that she was there, because her presence had always helped him in the theater. She yearned, too, to make him understand that his sufferingly disclosed weakness was a very sacred and tender thing to her, and that in some strange way, possible only to love, it made him greater in her eyes. Impelled by the desire to reach him in his need, she made her way through the darkened auditorium to the stage box.

Almost instantly he saw her. Their eyes met. He stopped, stood still in the center of the stage, and stared at her blankly. His lines forsook him. For a moment it seemed that both star and play were lost completely for that evening. Lenore leaned as far forward as she dared. The pose of her figure, the slight movement of her hands, and the lift of her face toward him—these all were a mystical utterance mightier than speech. The blankness left him. The eyes looking into hers flamed suddenly like stars of annunciation. The lines of stress went out of his face, and the lines of his part came back to his lips, and Davis Kerloa began to act in the manner that is technically known as "giving it to them!"

Lenore's eyes were full of tears, and her heart was full of peace. Again, as of yore, she experienced that liberating and lifting of the spirit to the contemplation of infinite beauties which it is the peculiar mission of Art to bring to humble minds. This was the Prayer Perfect of genius, pouring divinity into the consciousness of earthly beings through the simple modes of the heart, and, by its tender, ineffable presence, blotting out of thought all things petty, sordid, and sinful. Lenore looked over the several hundred Watertown folk from the farms and the little shops and the small, busy homes, where the spirits were narrow and cramped and the unimportant details innumerable, where "the triviyil roun', the common taesk," must furnish all they knew how to ask; and she saw eyes long dull from looking on dull life, or sharpened by narrow greeds, wet with easeful tears; faces touched with tenderness and a little wonder and a deeper thing that might almost be called joy.

She marveled vaguely at herself that she had had the temerity to pronounce upon the personal conduct of Davis Kerloa by the ethics of Watertown, when at that moment, because of the genius of Davis Kerloa, Watertown did not know that it had any ethics except to be filled with charity and warm tenderness, hope and happiness. Davis Kerloa had given these dreamless peo-

ple an Ideal. What had she ever given them except by the help she had been to Kerloa? What would her divorce do for them, or for herself, or for Davis Kerloa? She felt strangely humbled. In the abstract, wrong must still be wrong, of course, but in her heart Kerloa's wrong was canceled.

When the final curtain fell; the little one-night stand was in hysterics of enthusiasm. There might have been half a dozen curtain calls if the local stage manager, "Fat Hank" Hamm, the grocer's son, situated in the "flies," had not become so engrossed with the electrical art of Kerloa that he omitted to drop the curtain on the last act until one of the company left the stage and climbed up within hailing distance and brought him "to" with curses.

When Lenore succeeded in reaching the back of the scenes, the form of Fat Hank was filling the doorway of Kerloa's dressing room.

"Say, Mr. Kerloa, I thought I'd stop around and tell you I liked the way you acted to-night. Yes, I certainly did," he drawled comfortably.

"Thank you. How kind of you to come and say this to me," she heard Kerloa reply in his habitual manner of courteous remoteness. He could not see her where she stood.

"Welcome, I'm sure. It didn't delay me none. I live just the other end of the alley. I cert'nly think you did pretty good." And the enthusiast moved off, wide and leisurely in gait.

Behind the scenes—this was the actor-manager's kingdom, where his mere nod was law, and where *The Work* was the paramount consideration. Members of the company were moving about. Scraps of enthusiastic discussion floated out over dressing-room doors. Logan, Kerloa's manager, brushed hastily through the stage crew into the star's dressing room. He handed Kerloa a telegram. They stood considering its contents. Noguchi, Kerloa's Japanese valet, was wrapping carefully in paper the curious East Indian knife which Kerloa used in the play, and with which he had desired to operate upon Lee Banks.

Lenore felt like an interloper. She had no longer a right there. She had shut herself out of Kerloa's Kingdom of Work. When Logan departed, closing the door behind him, she waited several seconds before she could overcome her timidity sufficiently to rap. Noguchi opened to her. Kerloa, turning from his seat before the mirror, where he was removing his make-up, saw her. He rose instantly.

"Come in—come in! This is kind of you. Noguchi, find a chair for Mrs. Kerloa. Perhaps you will not mind being seated on the trunk for a moment, for I am afraid I must go on with this if we are to make that train to-night. We were late beginning."

"You are going on to-night?" she queried mechanically.

"We must. We play Herfordville to-morrow, and then on gradually into New York."

She might have been a stranger, so impersonally courteous was his manner, so aloof his spirit, armored in a dignity before which even the yearning of love must pause and wait for the permission to make itself known. His eyes were frank with a deep and accepted sorrow as they looked gravely into hers; he honored the cause of that sorrow too much to sink into subterfuge. Here was no longer the impetuous, passionate boy who had run to her for love while the house waited. This was the artist who had touched the secret of greatness and accepted its burden—solitude. She saw the divorce notice carefully smoothed out and bound with a packet of business letters.

"Do you like the play?" he asked presently.

"Yes. It is absorbing. And you—you are wonderful, Davis—wonderful! I feel that even I have never known your greatness before to-night." The tears came, and she made no pretense of hiding them. "I have never been so moved—so uplifted."

"You make me very happy," he said simply. "If you say that my performance is right, then I am satisfied. I know that you cannot make a mistake

with regard to my work. You are good to come and tell me. It was kind of you to sit where I could see you. I shall have that always—to remember."

There was a tat-a-tat on the door, and to Kerloa's "Come in!" entered Bertha Gene, fluttering and poised on her toes like a bird, her eyes and teeth sparkling, her red curls tossing.

"Oh, Mr. Kerloa, I felt I simply *must* come and tell you how *perfectly paralyzing* you were to-night! *Paralyzing!* I'll never forget it—not even in heaven, if they ever let me go there." She caught sight of Lenore behind the door, and gasped at her. "Oh, you're Mrs. Kerloa, aren't you? I can't wait for introductions. Isn't your husband the most wonderful man who ever lived? *Isn't he?* He even hypnotized the flyman—fat Bluebottle. That's going some for an actor!" She giggled. "Oh, you dear thing, you've been crying over him, haven't you? I don't blame you. He has even made me cry. Chiefly at rehearsal! It did seem as if I *couldn't* get the part to suit him and—"

"But you play it beautifully!" Lenore exclaimed involuntarily.

"Yes; I am very much pleased, Miss Gene," Kerloa added heartily.

"Yes, I've got it now. But, oh, those rehearsals! Mr. Kerloa, I want to tell you that I am about to have another family reunion. Yes. Harry and I—Harry Millard, my husband"—this was an explanatory aside to Lenore—"will unite again in New York. You see, Mrs. Kerloa, Harry and I are two bad children, and every so often we part forever, and don't write. I sued him for divorce one year when I was with Will Tawney's Rep Co.—I think they worked me too hard. I played everything from 'The Children in the Tower' to 'Camille,' and doubled as *Topsy* and *Little Eve*. He, he, he, he! The night we played *Reno* I sued Harry. I thought you could get it there by sending two cents in stamps. But no, it's not so easy. *Reno refused!* Harry never *will* let up on me for that. He used it as his star joke for a year—Harry's in vaudeville. I was fu-

rious, but I had to laugh, too! Well, as I was saying a mile back, Harry and I separate; then I come across a new picture of Harry, or he comes across a new picture of me in some Sunday drama sheet, and I think 'There's none like Harry!' and *he* says 'How I do love that girl!' Then we wire each other: 'Darling, come home. All is forgiven. Will meet you. Love.' Ten words exactly."

She bubbled gleefully, took a breath, and rattled on: "Oh, but I'm glad you are having a family party, too! Isn't that great? So pleased to meet you, Mrs. Kerloa. But I'll see you en route, of course. I must fly. I'm not packed yet. Mr. Kerloa promises me, if the play's a go in New York, I'm to be advanced to one of those 'and-her-maid' salaries. So pleased you're to be with us, Mrs. Kerloa. Paralyzing, Mr. Kerloa, *simply paralyzing!*" And away she flew.

"What spirits!" Kerloa mused aloud. "I don't know what I should have done without her gayety. I must hurry if I am to see you safely home before train time. Lenore—don't—don't cry like that." He put his hand softly on her shoulder.

"A—a vaudeville joke!" she sobbed, and then began to laugh hysterically. Presently she regained control, under the touch of his hand, and said quietly:

"I went down into the box to-night

because I saw it was hard for you—I wanted to be near you. I came back to tell you that I—I— Oh, Davis, I want to go on the road with you again! I don't belong here. I have done wrong to stay away from you. My place is with you, helping you to do your work. Everything else looks so little and silly beside that. I feel—ashamed. Please—won't you let me tear those papers now?"

His hand left her shoulder and lifted her face. He looked long into her eyes.

"You make me very happy," he said gently.

So Lenore Kerloa, to the scandal of Watertown, returned to her Pullman residence with her "faithless actor," recognizing that her rightful place was hand in hand with Davis Kerloa, wandering through "Bohemia"—great, needy, open Heart-of-the-World—singing to humble souls in little towns and big of that sea whose far, calling waters are Dreams Come True, whose color is beauty and tenderness, the dawn light on its blue.

If, on our daily course, our mind  
Be set to *hallow* all we find—

Although, contrary to precedent, she had fled from the meetinghouse to learn her lesson in the theater, perhaps Lenore Kerloa approached more nearly to the spirit of Keble's hymn than did the Meistersingers of Watertown.

## IN ARCADY

IN Arcady the poets feign,  
Through sunny days, by singing streams  
Love walks in rapt and happy dreams,  
And hearts know naught of grief and pain.

Glad am I we dwelt not there!  
Else had I sought for you in vain  
In Arcady.

Through pain our hearts were forced to share  
We touched the robe that has no seams;  
In dusk of grief we saw the beams  
Of love's bright star: and grief is ne'er  
In Arcady!

ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH.



**M**ISS TEMPLE was tacky.

If a girl is untidy or ill groomed, there is something the matter with her mirror, or her milliner, or her dress-maker; but if she is tacky, there is something the matter with the girl, and you cannot cure it with hairpins or safety pins, or new clothes. A hundred-dollar tailor suit looks like a fifteen-dollar ready-made, on a tacky woman.

Miss Temple did not know how to wear her clothes. Her skirts sagged, her frills and jabots flopped, her clean, coarse petticoat ruffles kept themselves in the public eye, somehow, without hanging below her skirt. If she pushed back a lock of hair from her white, veined forehead, another straight, corn-colored tress would slip down to replace it there. It was only by her limp unfreedom of pose that you knew the girl's tall, drooping figure was corseted.

She had been coming to Sunday-evening receptions at the Langford studio for so long that nobody in the Langford crowd could remember who had introduced her there; but Grace Langford did not venture to call her Helena, and Jerry Langford, who dispensed nicknames unblushingly on sight, had never told her that she was known to the crowd as the tacky Miss Temple. If he had told her, she might not have cared. Miss Temple looked out upon all the world and the Langford crowd

through a pair of magnificently indifferent sapphire eyes.

Jerry encountered her unseeing gaze one night halfway through his famous stunt of Alphonse and the Human Hair, and cut short his performance, and complained to his wife afterward that Miss Temple had the evil eye, like the Mona Lisa. Natalie Burgess, sinking into a flushed, breathless heap on the divan after her gypsy dance, was momentarily chilled when Miss Temple murmured:

"How nice."

Natalie was a professional vaudeville dancer, but her mother had been a Warren of Virginia. Her roommate was social secretary to a millionairess, who underpaid her, but turned over the opera box to her on rainy nights. Miss Temple's great-uncle had been a canon of the English church.

"I am not a snob," Mrs. Langford explained, when she refused to invite MacMurray, the sculptor, to dinner; "I do not turn him down because his mother was a scrubwoman—I dislike the man instinctively. In America, social distinctions are more vital than on the Continent, because they are based upon instinct. We rise to our own levels unaided by laws of caste; we claim our own."

Mrs. Langford had not stuck to her ideals without facing some disappointments; who does? Her ingratiating young German, who passed himself off as a count, proved to have gained his

knowledge of the aristocracy as a valet. Mr. Elphinstone, her dashing ex-guardsmen, turned out to be a professional gambler. But there was no mistake about Robert Estabrook.

He filled half a page of "Who's Who." He had done the book of a musical play in college that found its way to the professional stage and made good there. He led a cotillion, or won an athletic cup, or visited his sister, the Countess of Barchester, or denied his engagement to a foreign title or an American fortune, as often as the Sunday papers came out. His name had never been linked with a showgirl's, he had never made injudiciously large contributions to charity, or done anything more spectacular than to attend to his own affairs faithfully and consistently; but for a man in the early thirties, and possessed of an income that runs into seven figures, that is the surest way to get into the public eye, and stay there.

Besides, you were continually expecting him to do something interesting; you did not know quite what, or why you expected it. Robert Estabrook was a personage. If he did not know it, Mrs. Langford did.

He was a grave young man, with a confidential voice, and a tired smile, and friendly eyes. She met him in the dreary drawing-room of her Fifth Avenue cousin. She felt repaid for all the times she had made an unwilling and bullied fourth at auction there, for all the out-of-date evening gowns she had accepted, and all the fairy tales she had wasted upon her blasé nieces, the next Sunday night, when the Estabrook chauffeur permitted himself to discover the narrow door between the dairy and the cleaning establishment, after driving past it three times, and Robert Estabrook climbed the steep, linoleum-covered stairs to the red-shaded altar lamp at the Langfords' door.

He had the run of the big, bare work-room where a good friend of his turned out line drawings of faultlessly lovely ladies for the magazines, and he had his favorite corner among the divan cushions of a charming playwright who staged successful plays and poured suc-

cessful tea; but he had never before seen a studio that looked like a third-floor-back edition of his own drawing-room.

The details of polished mahogany and unshaded candlelight that made up this chastened atmosphere did not appear at first glance, but you saw at once that most of the men in the room were in evening dress. A girl in sharp pink was serving punch in one corner, with so many half-empty glasses in front of her that you were sure the punch was of some mild, drawing-room brew. A girl in dull blue was singing Tosti's "Good-by, Summer," in the sweet, lady-like voice that is discouraged in studios, but tolerated in drawing-rooms.

Mrs. Langford, in a last year's gown, remodeled so cleverly that it was hard to tell what gave it away, introduced him to the five pretty girls in the crowd. Their profession in New York was job hunting, and, in the carefully brushed tailor suits which are the uniform of that profession, they looked the part; they smiled shifty smiles, and made furtive eyes. But by candlelight they were almost as pretty as the girls Mr. Estabrook knew.

Mrs. Langford had done her best to discourage their flirtations with young men of artistic propensities and uncertain incomes and morals, but that had been a thankless task. Now she rose to the occasion joyfully. She set Mr. Estabrook looking at Botticelli madonnas with the blonde in blue, and turning music for the brunette in pink. She shut him into the kitchenette to open beer with her Sister Sybil, the prettiest of the five.

Mrs. Langford's attentions were so persistent that when she relaxed them abruptly, Mr. Estabrook looked relieved, but bewildered, and at a loss what to do next.

They were clearing a space for Natalie's harem dance. In the Langford studio you never sat down on the floor without apologizing to somebody, but even in that refined atmosphere you had to sit there after the chairs gave out. Mr. Estabrook—it was really his nature, not his pose, as the jealous hinted,



to be modest and retiring—sat down on a cushion in the darkest corner of the room, and leaned against the arm of a Gothic chair, which was occupied.

"You don't mind?" he said.

"No."

It was clear, from the voice behind him, that neither Mr. Estabrook's presence upon the cushion, nor his existence, was a thing to mind. Mr. Estabrook was modest and retiring, but he was not used to such a view of himself.

"I haven't met you," he said.

"No."

Natalie had worked herself energetically into the pose that was the climax of the first figure of her dance. Mr. Estabrook turned from the alluring picture of her outstretched arms, and inspected Miss Temple, and it must have been evident to him that he had not met her before, for there were not two gowns in the world like Miss Temple's white albatross.

Gothic chairs were invented as a background for flowing draperies, not for insufficient folds of dingy cream color, which looked as if it had tried to be white, and failed. A skimpy surplice waist incased the girl's slim figure clingingly. Jerry called the gown pseudo-classical. Miss Temple's soft hair had parted itself in three places, and fallen helplessly away from the gold Greek fillet imbedded in it, and the fillet looked almost indecently exposed. The chair exaggerated her slender height. She looked down at Mr. Estabrook, and through him, and beyond him. And there were not two pairs of eyes in the world like Miss Temple's sapphire eyes.

"Do you never converse in anything but monosyllables?" said Mr. Estabrook.

"No."

"You're going to."

For the flicker of an eyelid, no longer, the sapphire eyes looked at Mr. Estabrook, neither through him nor beyond him, and they were no longer bored, but hurt, and hunted, and lonely.

"No," breathed Miss Temple.

"You don't like me. You don't like

anybody," said Mr. Estabrook. "But—you're going to!"

After Natalie had been encored with due enthusiasm—it was largely the courteous attention accorded them there that lifted studio stunts to the level of parlor tricks at the Langfords'—Mrs. Langford bore down upon Mr. Estabrook once more with a determined smile that he knew, the smile of the Perfect Hostess, which is the same in drawing-rooms and studios. There is no escape from it. He no longer tried to escape. Under her gratified eye, he was sweet to the girl in blue, and sprightly with the girl in pink, and silent with Sybil, who was self-confident, and liked to do all the work herself.

"He stayed until twelve. Sybil is motoring with him next week. He even talked five minutes to Miss Temple," said Mrs. Langford, as she converted the davenport lounge into a bed. The studio did not look quite so much like a drawing-room at night. "I don't see how we did it, Jerry."

But they had done it. Soon, Mr. Estabrook was turning up on Sunday nights as regularly as the loneliest of rising poets or artists, or else sending flowers so carefully chosen that they were glad he had stayed away. The first time he came to dinner, Grace had six courses sent in from a caterer's, but the next time he made a French omelet with truffles and mushrooms, changed the plates, and washed the dishes, with an apron over his dinner coat. In time it ceased to distress Grace when the cups were short, and he took his tea from a claret glass. If he found her out at tea time, he let himself in with the latchkey under the doormat, as Sybil did.

A man who sent an occasional posy to every woman on his calling list was a revelation to Sybil and the rest of the five. Their young men did not waste their money on fifty-cent table d'hôte dinners and balcony theater seats for a girl, unless she happened to be the only girl, for the time. Each one of the five might have been the only girl to Mr. Estabrook, he gratified their individual tastes so tactfully.

He purchased first-night tickets for new operas at fabulous prices. He had books rebound under his special direction. He presented rare prints as souvenirs of an hour in an art gallery. He took the undiscovered novelist to lunch at the new Bartin's, where she had laid a scene in her forthcoming book, an exhaustive satire on New York society. He took Sybil to tea at Sherry's the first time she wore her winter hat.

But the Langfords did not realize how completely he had identified himself with their crowd, until they saw him at a *matinée* recital of Russian music, with a girl who drew their attention before they recognized her, a light, slender figure, drooping and bending forward, as if she were drawn by the barbaric rhythm of the dance.

"Botticelli," Jerry whispered. "Youth. Spring."

The dance came to an end in a crashing chaos of sound.

"That was the gavotte; the one they make such a fuss about," prompted Grace, applauding. Then she raised her glass. The lovely, swaying figure was gone. A tall girl sat fingering her program awkwardly, while a woman behind her leaned forward to fasten a hook of her gown.

"Only a lamb like Bob," said Grace, "would be seen of his own free will in public with Miss Temple."

On the principle that you are pleased if your young man takes your incorrigible small brother to the Hippodrome, the Langford crowd accepted Mr. Estabrook's attentions to the unattractive Miss Temple as a tribute to their own attractions. They were flattered when he escorted her to vespers, or took her for walks in the Park—not the loitering, flirtatious *tête-à-têtes* Sybil affected, but real walks, as they knew from Miss Temple's pink cheeks and sparkling eyes. Sybil scorned the quiet tea rooms Miss Temple chose; they were on out-of-the-way cross streets, and nobody except yourself knew that you had been there; you paid Broadway prices, and heard no music, so you did not get your money's worth.

On the night of his birthday dinner to Sybil, they felt that he had gone too far. The five pretty girls were remodeling their five prettiest gowns for that event a week ahead. No man who did not own a dinner coat accepted the invitation, so Mr. Estabrook borrowed two husbands to make the numbers come right. He had the full consent of the wives, who were also lending their evening cloaks; he had raised the tone of the affair, they thought, and placed his guests on a level with members of circles where domestic ties are never irksome, and it is a matter of course, not an event, to dine at the Ritz.

The coffee room looked bigger and emptier than Mrs. Langford had pictured it, and Sybil's cerise gown attracted a good deal of attention, but it was her birthday, and she had a right to the center of the stage.

"You look like a rose, my dear. Doesn't she, Robert?" said Mrs. Langford. "What is that little thing they are playing? The music is so right here, always. Why don't we go into the dining room?"

"We are not all here yet," said Mr. Estabrook, and just then, at the head of the shallow flight of stairs which a pretty woman knows at sight for a place to look her prettiest, Sybil, already planning for a little triumph after dinner in the moment of trailing her cerise gown nonchalantly down the steps under the admiring eyes of the coffee room and Mr. Estabrook, saw a girl in blue.

The blue was washed out and lifeless; the bodice had that unforgivable neck line which is neither high nor low. She paused on the top stair, pushed a floating lock of hair inside her head-dress—a band of blue velvet, supporting a top-heavy, emaciated ostrich plume—and drifted aimlessly toward the party.

"Hello, you're late!" she said. "Mr. Estabrook, I've been in to see after the flowers, as you asked me. This is very good fun. We have none of us been here before."

"And the worst of it was, Jerry," lamented Mrs. Langford, "that she

managed to seem more at home there than any of us. You would have thought she had breakfast, and dinner, and luncheon there every day."

The blue gown was new, if the be-dragged additions to Miss Temple's wardrobe could ever be said to be new. So were the plum-colored tailor suit which needed pressing the first time she wore it, the frayed foulard, and the mouse-colored broadcloth—one drab note more in her negative color scheme—and the raincoat, to which, for some unaccountable reason, she had added a velvet collar. She was seen in that coat three times a week on the avenue in Robert Estabrook's car.

Mrs. Langford, making out the list for a theater party he was giving her, could not recall by what delicate means he had made it known to her, but was clear in her mind that she had added Miss Temple's name because Mr. Estabrook wanted her to. He not only included her in all his parties; he featured her. He gave her the prominent seat in a box as if she were the guest of honor, and deferred to her in ordering a meal as if she were hostess.

Miss Temple lived by herself; nobody could remember where without consulting an address book. Her hall bedroom might or might not permit her to receive men, or her boarding-house parlor be ugly enough to discourage their visits.

"But where is he spending his time? I am not jealous," said Mrs. Langford, "but I am disappointed in Robert. Sybil, now, has learned that a man means less than he says, not more; but Miss Temple is not fair game. She will take him seriously, and break her heart when he drops her. Nothing worse could happen to the girl."

In the early spring, something worse did happen to Miss Temple. She lost her job.

The publishing house then rejecting the undiscovered novelist's book had employed Miss Temple.

"They told her they were reducing the office force," one of the readers explained to the novelist, "but my cousin starts in here next week. They have

to consider appearances." The reader smoothed her patent-leather belt into place. "Of course, Miss Temple was competent."

Mrs. Langford restored the novelist's faith in her book periodically by listening to readings from it every time it came home. The youngest job hunter, forced to give up posing at fifty cents an hour for a middle-aged illustrator because he made love to her, hastened to tell Mrs. Langford just what he had said. There was dinner enough for one unexpected guest every night at the Langfords', and a judicious blend of sympathy and amusement that changed the day's tale of woe from tragedy to comedy.

But the common affliction which united the job-hunting group served further to isolate Miss Temple. The girls agreed that it ought to teach her to dress better, but they found no opportunity to tell her so. She looked as forlorn as ever in her lifeless clothes, and she was not seen regularly at the pure-food restaurant they patronized; but she never had been. They did not know when she went without her dinner, and when she dined elsewhere.

Sybil found her eating baked beans one night, with tears in her eyes, and slipped into a chair beside her, putting a small, warm hand over hers, and said:

"We are both girls trying to get on in New York, and we ought to help each other all we can."

"If I can help you, I shall be glad," was all Miss Temple had to say.

Robert Estabrook was now genuinely fond of Miss Temple. The five job hunters were keen-witted, as all innocent adventuresses must be to get on in the world, and they knew. All Sybil's wide-eyed ingénue absorption in him could not keep him from hearing one indifferent word of Miss Temple's from across the room. He adjusted her trailing wisps of scarf as if he liked to touch them. Before Sybil had recognized the lonely figure dragging home along the avenue in the gathering dusk of a drizzly March night, he had rapped his chauffeur sharply on the shoulder, and stopped to take Miss

Temple, muddy-booted and inarticulate, into the car with them.

The Langfords came upon the two on a secluded park bench. Miss Temple's white veil was pushed up on her forehead in a wilted bunch. She was crying, and Robert was holding her long, cheaply gloved hand, and looking at her with grave, intent eyes. They heard her say, in a tired, hopeless voice:

"Oh, Robert, you do not understand. I cannot!"

"She had holes in both gloves, and patent-leather pumps on, in all that mud!" said Grace, when they had escaped without being seen. "He must be trying to lend her money. Of course, she can't take it from him. Would she take some from you?"

"No," said Mr. Langford, so sheepishly that it seemed he had reason to be sure. Grace did not take warning from him, but tried to give Miss Temple a gown of Sybil's.

It was a pink chiffon gown, all frills and freshness, a gown to be happy in. Whatever Miss Temple hoped to get out of her affair with Robert Estabrook—a lasting friendship, a sentimental memory, or a job at a decent salary—he ought to see the girl once at her best before his fancy for the strange comradeship faded, and he returned to his own kind. But Grace failed to put this convincingly to Miss Temple.

The girl held up the gay little gown in her long, blue-veined hands, and it seemed to grow every minute a little less pink, and a little less fresh, and a little less gay, till Grace felt inclined to snatch it away, and apologize.

"The frock seems to be in good condition," said Miss Temple. "My landlady's daughter is just Miss Sybil's height. If I might accept it for her?"

She declined tea, and went away carrying the dress in a brown-paper parcel, and looking dignified in spite of it; but the hard shine of unshed tears in her blue eyes haunted Grace till she saw her again, the night of the dinner dance.

Late in March, Mrs. Langford's Fifth Avenue cousin sailed for Italy at a week's notice. Though she got value received by leaving Grace to close her

elaborate establishment for the summer, she did something graceful, and unexpected, and inspired, as the most unrelated of our relatives will sometimes do. She countermanded the invitations for a party, but she did not countermand the caterer's orders. She left the dinner, and the flowers, and the music, and her house and servants, for the evening, to the Langfords.

Instead of a supper at the studio, attended by the crowd en masse, and too small to accommodate them, shabby and worn with the winter's use, and looking more like a studio than a drawing-room, they ended the season with a dinner dance. And instead of the cousin's guests—most of them surprised to find each other there, for the cousin was a climber who had been permitted to climb, but had not yet been forgiven for it—came the Langford crowd, in a state of decorously subdued excitement, and so carefully gotten up that the Langfords were proud of them all.

The cousin's florist was cleverer than her interior decorator had been. There was too much gilt and brocade in the drawing-rooms, and the reception hall would have looked aggressively bare, and large, and baronial without the roses.

"But it is perfect to-night, and so are we," said Grace. "Sheer floor space is horribly essential to a woman. How can you enter a room with dignity when it measures two by four? Look at that child!" The youngest job hunter was sweeping her homemade train across the wide floor, which had been cleared for dancing, with her head held high, and an unaccustomed flush on her cheeks. "And look at Sybil!"

For the first time in her life, Sybil was talking to four men at once without flirting, apportioning her dances with a staid graciousness in piquant contrast to her naughty black eyes.

"She is the prettiest thing in New York," said Grace. "If only Robert would come."

"Good Lord, who is that girl?" said Jerry.

Sybil dropped the fan she had painted to match her cerise gown, and none of

her attendant group moved to pick it up. They were staring at the girl who had come in with Robert Estabrook.

She stood still in the door till she had all their eyes upon her, an arrogant trick in a merely pretty woman, but the girl in the lavender gown was beautiful.

"Jerry, we must have been blind!" gasped Grace. For the lavender gown, touched here and there with a tender green like the stems of flowers, the immaculate, simple coiffure, the burnished sheen of careful grooming in the pale hair, and the distinction of bearing, were new. But the cloud of fine, fair hair, the straight-limbed, pliant body, the colorless skin, and scarlet lips, and mysterious sapphire eyes were not new to them, or should not have been. The beauty was Miss Temple.

"How did you do it? Where—when—" Miss Temple flashed her hostess one remote glance from under lowered eyelids. "My dear, you look charming. I am delighted to see you," Grace finished weakly.

That was an unforgettable evening. The novelist is still faking local color for tales of the smart set from her recollections of it. The youngest job hunter, discovered in tears in one of the perfectly appointed guest rooms, explained that she was tired of her box couch, and wanted to sleep in a bed again. In a corner under the stairs, the most impecunious of the artists persuaded the soprano that seventy-five dollars a month was enough to keep house in New York on. Though she has found that it is not, she has never been sorry that he persuaded her.

But the real sensation was Miss Temple. It was only Miss Temple who seemed unconscious of this. She danced with the yielding grace that is almost a lost art in this athletic generation, and the men quarreled over her dances. If she sat out a dance up in the library where the elegant, unread books were displayed, or uninterestedly investigated the billiard room, they scented the news by the unfailing instinct that makes it hard for royalty to travel incognito.

The women did not gossip, or wonder how she had made herself over, or even plan to copy her gown. They could not. She was a finished product, above all imitation or criticism.

It was the most remarkable transformation since Cinderella's, but Miss Temple behaved more like the sleeping beauty than like Cinderella. She had very little to say, in her high-pitched, silvery voice. You had to work hard for a smile. She never laughed. The sapphire eyes seemed to look at you from far away. She was alive all over when she was dancing, but, with the end of the music, the color and laughter would die out of her face, leaving it every time a little more pale, and still, and cold.

"I can't think why I never wanted to paint her," said Jerry, "except that she ought to be modeled. That face is almost a death mask."

Sybil found her staring at her exquisite self in a tall, dimly lit mirror upstairs; and the white face in the glass, and the wistful blue eyes, were so lovely that she put both arms around the slender lady in lavender, and whispered:

"You 'fairy princess, I wish you'd kiss me!"

At first she thought that the lady in lavender had not heard, and then that she was angry, then cool lips touched her forehead, so softly that it seemed the kiss could not have been real.

It was on the misshapen little inlaid desk in the dressing room that Sybil found Miss Temple's letter.

Listening to the Blue Danube waltz from the head of the branching staircase, and remembering complacently that her cousin, in that conspicuous position, looked every one of the hundred and eighty pounds she weighed, Mrs. Langford felt satisfied with herself and her party. It was not over, but it was off her mind, and out of her hands. She had been her most tactful and efficient self. She had called shirking young men to the assistance of wall-flowers. She had seen that the novelist should not have to go home alone to farthest Harlem, or the youngest job

hunter to Washington Square. Without further help from her, all the girls seemed to be dancing with the right men now, and vanishing into secluded corners at the right moment, and looking happy and pretty.

"As pretty as if there were not a real beauty here to steal their thunder," she said. "Jerry, we have been stupid about Miss Temple, but we'll make it up to her."

"We don't deserve the chance," said Mr. Langford. They looked for the fair, high head among the dancers, and did not see it. "She went into the library, with Estabrook. He has been chasing her about all the evening, and just got a dance with her. Oh, there——"

But the girl who came hurrying up the stairs with Robert Estabrook was Sybil.

"Read that! It's addressed to you, Grace," she said. "We can't find Miss Temple. She excused herself twenty minutes ago, and did not come back."

The penciled scrawl on the cousin's heavily monogrammed note paper was in a hand that neither of the two women had seen before, though they had known Miss Temple three years. They read:

I hope you won't be concerned about me. I know you have tried to be good to me. I think, if I had not known that you call me the tacky Miss Temple, I could have worn that pink dress of Sybil's. I wanted to. I have been trying to find other work, and I have not been able to. If I had come to you, and let you show me, I know that any one of you would have been glad to help. There is a trick about putting on your clothes, and doing up your hair, that makes all the difference between misery and happiness, but I have never learned it. I showed you to-night what I could look like if I had that trick, in a rented costume, with the help of a hired hairdresser; but it took all the money I had. I am going away.

A persistent pair or two of young people were making the most of the last strains of the Blue Danube. Mrs. Langford gave a creditable imitation of watching them, as she crumpled the letter in her hand.

"Mr. Estabrook, it is all your fault!" blazed Sybil.

"Sybil!" For the first and the last time in her life, Mrs. Langford was unmistakably a thoroughbred. "Mr. Estabrook, Miss Temple has gone. She will not come back. She is not ill. There is nothing you can do."

There proved to be nothing that any one in the Langford crowd could do for Miss Temple. In the next two weeks, her landlady had to climb the stairs from her cabbage-scented basement and answer inquiries about her almost as many times as in the entire two years that Miss Temple had been a fifth-floor roomer there, but her answer was always the same. Sybil did not wait for her sister to decide whether to apologize first, or to buy Miss Temple a dress, or to find her a job; she went to decide for herself the morning after the dance. Miss Temple was not in, and the landlady could not say what time she had come in the night before. It was not until she had denied her several times to the Langfords that the woman became alarmed and communicative, and confessed that she was not sure Miss Temple had come home at all. She had not been seen since that night.

Melodramatic as the sudden disappearance seemed, hotly as they ridiculed Sybil when she said, "If you could have seen her eyes in the mirror! I think she has killed herself," it was a complete disappearance.

No bedraggled young woman in unpressed skirts came to relieve their growing anxiety on the rainy spring days when they felt most penitent about their neglect of her. The lavender lady had vanished on the stroke of the hour, like a real Cinderella. Caricature or beauty, the Langford crowd had seen the last of Miss Temple.

Her rent had been paid up to the day she disappeared. They could not tell whether her bare little room was dismantled, or merely as bare as usual. The limp gowns were neatly packed in her one trunk as if she had expected to send for them, but she did not send. Sybil cried over an elaborately executed darn under the wide hem of the white albatross, when they opened the trunk



in search of the clew they failed to find there. They asked questions about her, and found out nothing, and realized all over again what a lonely creature she had been. After two weeks, they began to look for her in earnest. They had no help in their search from Mr. Estabrook.

He was to spend the summer in Switzerland. He was sailing next week—it appeared without bidding them good-by.

"I hate him!" said Sybil. "She could not hold him, and she knew why, and she could not bear it. How can he ever face us, with her fate on his conscience?"

"He may not know she is lost," objected Grace; for Mr. Estabrook had not answered their letters, and over the telephone his valet had told them that he was busy, or out of town. They began to believe that he was ashamed to talk to them, because he had heard of Miss Temple's disappearance, and wished to avoid his share of the responsibility for it. They had almost agreed that they never wanted to see him again, when Mrs. Langford received this note from him:

DEAR LADY: To-morrow night the papers will have our news, but we want you to hear it first from us. We sail at twelve to-morrow. We shall be looking out for you until then. Will you come and wish us Godspeed?

The solution was so simple, that it did not occur to them even then. Mrs. Langford had not helped on her future social advancement by carrying a single flower to the bride. Though they all insisted that they had foreseen it from the first, the five job hunters, a stray artist or two, and Grace and Jerry Langford had the surprise of their lives next day.

Side by side, coated and capped, a pair of enthusiastic, but seasoned-looking tourists in contrast to the overdressed, overchaperoned boarding-school misses who were waving ostentatious and tearful farewells near by, two very much married young people leaned over the rail of the *Raretania*, and laughed into their astonished faces.

"Hello, you're late! Come up and see our cabins," said a silvery voice. "Isn't this fun? I never have crossed before."

"There was a lock of hair straggling over her forehead the same old way, and she has her own personal maid!" said Mrs. Langford, only partly subdued by the unfamiliar splendors of the bridal suite. "To think she was married the very night of the dance, when we were so worried about her! It seems ungrateful. Oh, Jerry, how Sybil could dress on even five thousand a year!"

Mrs. Estabrook looked wistfully after the group on the shore, and Mr. Estabrook looked at Mrs. Estabrook, and held her hand shamelessly under cover of a cluster of Killarney roses, because he saw tears in her eyes.

"Robert, I am the happiest woman in the world, but I was the unhappiest girl," she said. "Robert, you are sure it was not the lavender dress?"

"In the lavender dress, and everything else you ever wore, you were beautiful," he said.

"Because, when I saw that a few yards of cloth, and my hairpins in the right place, could buy me all the friendship and affection I was starving for, they did not seem worth while, and I wanted to run away from everybody," said the bride, "everybody but you. You loved me just as much in the lavender gown as you had before, and no more, and no less, and that is why I married you."

Mr. Estabrook was not listening. Men seldom are on the rare occasions when women tell them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He was looking his last at the Langford crowd.

"Funny old dears! We might see a little something of them next winter," he said. "But—darling, I never was much on clothes. Evelyn's like me. Tramps miles in high boots and corduroys, and Barchester has to catch her and lock her into her dressing room for her maid to get her into decent dinner togs. But I do know this. Clothes

ought to be like your hair, or your skin, or your code of honor—you have them, but you don't think about them. They're part of you. Clothes ought not to come out at you and hit you in the eye. Now, those plump-partridge tailor suits of Mrs. Langford's, the tight cut of them, and the—er—primary colors of little Miss Sybil's things, and the general notion I got that a woman would know every gown in the crowd was year before last, or earlier—Those girls are plucky little things, and

good sports, every one of them. Why can't you give them a hint about their clothes?"

"Robert, I love you!" said Mrs. Estabrook.

"Darling," said Mr. Estabrook carelessly—as if he were rounding off an unimportant subject before returning to the discussion of more vital ones, by going through the form of asking for an explanation where no rational explanation could be—"why did they call you the tacky Miss Temple?"



## TRANSMUTED

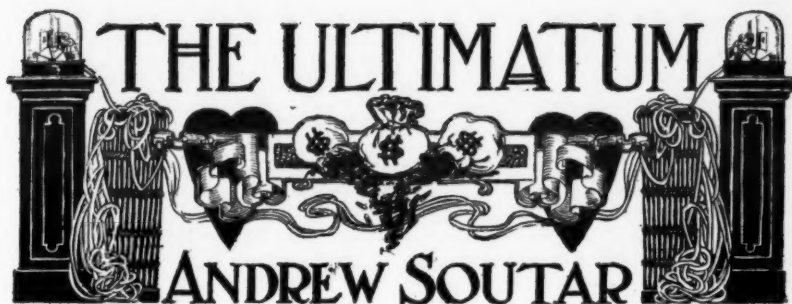
I DREAMED of light;  
And then in the heart of the night,  
Your face came to me, clear, like a star,  
Out of my dreams afar.  
My heart—and its breaking,  
My love—and its aching,  
Went up to you through the night,  
And You were the Light.

I dreamed of rest;  
And straightway, magical, blest—  
Your hand was laid like a kiss on my heart,  
And hushed the smart.  
My striving—and sobbing,  
My burning—my throbbing,  
All stilled by a touch unguessed!  
And You were my Rest.

I dreamed of song;  
And in the night hours long  
Your heart from far away did speak to mine,  
In cadences divine;  
Music of smiles and of weeping  
And great wings sweeping,  
Harmonies wild and true . . .  
And the Song was You.

A. A. C.

# THE ULTIMATUM



## ANDREW SOUTAR

**P**ROBABLY you will ask:  
"What was Simeon  
Groote's answer?"

Let me say at once that I offer no reply. I dare not. Other men have been placed in circumstances somewhat similar, and it is not for me to judge their actions. Moreover, this is not a didactic story, but a plain statement concerning the life of Simeon Groote. With his morals we are not concerned, for if in refusing to marry the daughter of Stephen Cantalupe he evinced a lack of chivalry, it has to be taken into account that when he transferred his affections to Eleanor, the daughter of Sir Robert Meadowe, he continued them. Indeed, it can be said of Groote that he was a lover during the whole of his married life.

No one who had occasion to transact business with Simeon Groote could reconcile the keen, penetrant eyes of the stockbroker with the soft, lingering tenderness generally accepted as the hall mark of the ideal lover. To see him standing over a tape machine, divested of his coat, his shirt sleeves rolled back almost to the shoulders, his great jaw protruding, and his eyebrows narrowed, was to gain the impression of a man who paid homage to Mammon during the whole of his waking hours and dreamed of Midas during the short time that he snatched for sleep.

Groote was a strong man physically and mentally. He had fought his way up the financial ladder by sheer force

of character. He had entered the City as a boy, with the fixed determination to hold sway one day. Never in those early days did he relax his efforts or modify his ambitions. Other youths might deem entertainment essential after business hours, but always his great anxiety was that he might grow old too soon—before he was able to reach the pinnacle at which he aimed. We must not pay too great a tribute to the virtues of Simeon Groote, but it is only fair to him to say that no one ever so fully deserved success—up to the time when he made the acquaintance of Adeline, the daughter of Stephen Cantalupe.

And then again I am not sure that we are justified in judging a man's public triumphs by attempting to balance them with what happens in his private life. On reflection, we should have a tremendous store of unused laudatory adjectives if our ancestors had discounted genius because of its domestic misdeeds.

Simeon Groote was a very wealthy man when, snatching an hour from stocks and shares in order quietly to reflect, he decided that a marriage between himself and Adeline Cantalupe would be the height of folly on the part of both of them. No one knew exactly how he came to be acquainted with her. Certainly he could not have displayed his customary discrimination in this his first attempt at discovering affinity. Her nature was too much like his own, and it is only extremes in temperament that culminate in the

happy union. She was inclined to be dictatorial; she attempted even to advise him in his business; she was inquisitive, and, seeking to impress him with her knowledge of finance, she helped only to dig a gulf between them. The end came with dramatic suddenness—and here it is necessary to emphasize the wrong that Simeon Groote inflicted on Adeline Cantalupe.

For eight years—from the time when he was twenty-five—he had led her to believe that her heart was safe in his keeping. Of course, the subject of marriage had been mooted, but he had always insisted that not until he reached the heights would he allow his thoughts to be diverted from financial schemes. She had waited patiently. She had allowed the years to pass by without considering potentialities. She believed in him, trusted him implicitly, and she was thirty-five when she awoke one morning to find two gray hairs looking at her warningly from the mirror.

And then came Groote's brutal decision—brutal under the circumstances—that she was not the woman to share his life. He told her this not without some hesitation, but there was no mistaking the callous determination underlying his quiet speech. It was characteristic of Adeline that she did not give way to hysterics. She was in his office when he told her of his decision, and she took the blow without a perceptible quiver. True, her lips lost their color, and in that instant her eyes assumed a dull and far-away expression. For a moment he believed that she had not heard him distinctly.

"I was saying that I am very sorry," he began.

She lowered her lashes, as if his words had started a fresh twinge of pain. Then she said:

"Sorry—sorrow! Do you think that an expression of regret can mollify my feelings? Do you think that I have only to go out of this office in order again to see the sun and feel its warmth? Do you think that by a shrug of the shoulders, a snap of the fingers, and a little sigh I can throw off eight dead years?"

He made no answer. The tape machine was clicking. He half turned, and picked up a strip of figured paper. A smile of exultation came over his face.

"'Mexicans down'—by Jove! I told the fools a week ago that they would fall." Then again he turned to her. "You were saying, Adeline—"

What a mind his was! All that had happened a few moments before might have been sponged out of it. For the first time since she had known him she realized that his was not the heart for wooing—the cankerworm of gain was in its core.

With an abrupt movement, she passed out of his presence. He went back to the tape machine, and a few seconds later his powerful voice was hurling out orders to half a dozen clerks. The frenzy of finance was on him. The fierce rush of blood, momentarily checked, had resumed its course. The grandeur, or the hideousness, of hard City work is that it can make a man forget.

Now, at the time when Simeon Groote cast off the woman who had grown old in the service of love there was no other person to whom he had transferred his affections; Eleanor came later. All that he had done was to stop abruptly in a path that he believed was leading him nowhere. And after Adeline left the office he thought no more of the parting than might be summarized thus: "That work's done." He didn't give himself time to anticipate the rendering of accounts.

It was ten o'clock on the following morning that the whole of his moral fiber received a violent shock. Stephen Cantalupe, his face distorted by anguish and vindictiveness, burst into Groote's office. Groote was in his shirt sleeves, as usual. He had mapped out a great day's work, and was preparing to go up to the exchange.

"I want to see you," Cantalupe said, and there was a threat in the grit of his teeth and the clenching of his hands.

"Can't be done," said Groote, reaching for his coat.

His secretary was in the room at

the time, and he threw the man a glance that meant:

"Don't let him detain me."

But Cantalupe was not to be denied. Physically he was a much weaker man than Groote, but he was being moved by a passion that redoubled his strength.

"I want to see you—in private, or in public, I don't care which," he said; and Groote, quick to realize that something was wrong, led the way into his private office.

Cantalupe faced him.

"What happened here yesterday?" he demanded. "Between you and Adeline, I mean."

Groote glanced impatiently at his watch.

"I'm due at the 'house' in ten minutes, Mr. Cantalupe," he said, "and I'm not in the habit of discussing my private affairs in these circumstances. It was my intention to write to you, explaining the reasons that influenced me. I endeavored to explain them to Adeline herself, and was satisfied in my own mind that she appreciated their logic. But I will write to her—"

Cantalupe shook his head.

"It's too late," he said, in a strained voice.

Groote looked up sharply.

"Adeline died last night," said Cantalupe; and there was a dramatic silence in the room for fully a minute. Then Groote said in a whisper that betrayed how hard he had been hit:

"You don't mean to say that it was a case of—"

"The doctor calls it sudden failure of the heart," said Cantalupe; "but Adeline left a note for me, in which she hinted at something that happened here yesterday."

Groote breathed relievedly. He had dreaded suicide.

"I am deeply sorry to learn your news, Mr. Cantalupe," he said, "especially having regard to the fact that poor Adeline and I did not part on the best of terms."

A secretary knocked imperatively at the door. Groote was wanted on the exchange.

"I'll make it my business to come to see you to-night," Groote said to the white-faced father, and moved toward the door.

Cantalupe grasped him by the right arm and wheeled him around with a violent twist.

"Stop!" he cried. "You can't treat death like that. I want an explanation, and I'm going to have it before you leave this office."

Groote drew himself up stiffly, and his thin lips curled disdainfully.

"I have expressed my sympathy with you," he said coldly, "and there is nothing more to be said."

Stephen Cantalupe was unable to find words with which to express himself. He released his grasp of Groote's arm, and stared at him incredulously.

"Good God, man!" he breathed. "Can you stand there and treat my grief so lightly that your greed of money—"

"Always my business stands first," said Groote, and there was the flicker of a boastful smile on his lips.

Cantalupe groped for a chair.

"Can't I bring it home to you?" he groaned. "Are you human?"

"There is nothing to bring home to me," said Groote, "and I am quite capable of appreciating your feelings. I have told you that I will come along to your place and endeavor to explain to you the whole of the unfortunate matter."

For a moment Cantalupe believed that this man of finance had lost his mental balance. He seemed utterly incapable of evincing a single human emotion.

"Can't bring it home to you," he muttered, his eyes fixed and staring; "but, by Heaven, Groote, I'll try! My daughter is dead—died of a broken heart. There is a price to pay for that, and if there is such a quality as justice you'll be made to pay the price."

Simeon Groote caught the last words as he passed from the room. He was not wholly devoid of human feeling, and it was not too much to say that if Cantalupe had approached him in a less aggressive manner he would have touched the latent chords of contrition.

But Groote's mental and physical strength resented aggressiveness in any one, and as he passed from the office and to his car he shut his mind to thoughts of the dead woman, and exercised all his feelings of bitterness toward the father, who had dared to threaten him.

That same day Simeon Groote staggered old members of the exchange by his apparent recklessness in buying Russian Oils, which they themselves had utterly despised. A few, believing in his infallibility, speculated slightly, and before the "house" closed those few were comparatively rich men. Groote himself must have cleared eighty thousand.

During the next month the name of Simeon Groote was on the lips of every one. Whatever he touched turned to gold. He was a beacon to be followed. The newspapers made of him a financial hero. Glowing tributes to his acumen were published daily. He was photographed and snapshotted as the "lion" of the hour, and some of the more inquisitive of the journals delved into his private life, and in their accounts of his business achievements interwove the story of his "lost love." To an unsophisticated reader this story was infinitely pathetic; to Groote himself it was bathos.

And then he married Eleanor, the daughter of Sir Robert Meadowe.

The announcement did not come as a surprise, for during the last three months Groote had not hesitated to evince his partiality for the companionship of Sir Robert's daughter. Eleanor was one of those reserved women whose very reserve beautifies them. There was little difference between their ages—Groote's nature was not the kind to find sympathy in the simperings of youth. Eleanor's sedateness, her quiet sympathy and views of life as a whole appealed to him. And then again he had to fight for her, and perhaps in appeasing the spirit of beligerency he fulfilled all the demands of his heart.

Sir Robert Meadowe's daughter was betrothed to Anthony Croane when

Groote made her acquaintance. Croane also was engaged in finance, but the difference between his "strength" and that of Groote was incalculable. Groote was a master, Croane a pupil. But whereas Groote commanded the respect and admiration of the society that he affected, Croane held their warmest affection. A lovable man in every way, he was the first to congratulate the successful rival. He lessened the insidious task imposed on Eleanor himself, and accepted his *congé* in that heroic spirit which is neither indifference nor despair.

A week after the marriage an alteration was made in the firm of Simeon Groote, and some people smiled pathetically when they marked the altered note heading—"Groote & Croane, Stockbrokers." Not that Croane had sacrificed any degree of dignity in entering into partnership with the man who had robbed him of a bride. True, the proposition had come from Groote, but in offering it he had said:

"You and I may do great things together, Croane. Sometimes I fear that I am not stable enough. I want some one with a level head to caution me, to hold me in check. I'll outline the policy, if you like, but I shall leave it to you to criticize and detect its flaws."

Again Croane, when he joined Groote in business, was comparatively wealthy, so that one other, and a hateful, suggestion lost its point. If Croane had not the brains of Groote, he had the blessing of being born under a lucky star. Fortune favored him without asking of his brain any undue exertion.

Within five years the two wealthiest men in the City were Simeon Groote and Anthony Croane. It might be said that they were the happiest, for Croane had solaced himself for the loss of Eleanor by the cultivation of a philosophy peculiar to good-natured bachelors, while Groote, under the glowing influence of a good woman, had risen high above the sordidness of finance. There were those who had looked askance at the union—they had feared that the lover would be overshadowed by the



financier, and that the beautiful woman who had intrusted herself to him would pine in vain for the tenderness that sanctifies marriage. But they were wrong. Never was husband so devoted as Simeon Groote. The silver scales of the financier fell away from him, and the human man was revealed.

Each succeeding day disclosed an additional charm in Eleanor, his wife. She opened the gates of a new world for him—a world outside the financial ring in which he had been penned so many years. The great love that she was enjoying opened her eyes to the sufferings beyond the boundaries of her own life. She interested herself in a hundred institutions, organizing nursing homes, relief stations, convalescent homes, and so forth.

The children of the slums were her especial care, and in this connection Simeon Groote realized the one drop of sorrow in his cup of joy. They never spoke of it, but they read each other's eyes. Generally it was on her return from a visit to the slum children that the vision of their mutual hopes stood out against the sky line. Then would the tears flood into her eyes, and while he placed his arms about her and hid her flushed face against his breast his lips would move with an unspoken prayer.

Once he took the lovable Croane into his confidence.

"Croane, old fellow," he said, "I wonder what your advice would be if I suggested a third partner. Eleanor has many moments of loneliness. Do you know what I mean?"

Croane intimated that he didn't.

"I suppose," said Groote, feeling his way, "that one can get a great deal of pleasure out of an adopted son."

Croane understood. For a moment he closed his eyes.

"Don't do that, Sim," he said quietly. "I know of a man who had his heart broken through adopting a child. He brought the boy up to his tenth year, and then the unexpected happened. He was given a son of his own. I'm not going to tell you the story, but just think for yourself—supposing you

brought a boy up for some years, and taught him to love you, and then—supposing—another one came along? Could you forget the first without a qualm?"

Groote nodded understandingly, and went back to his desk.

Eleanor was thirty-nine when the angels pitied her. No one shall describe the joy that surged through Simeon Groote. In that brief moment when she told him of the pitying he saw the gates of paradise shimmering in a burst of sun glory. The whole of the old world, the impregnable walls of convention and routine, with their moats of finance—were shut out, and only the sun remained.

But even as the great disk reached its zenith, and shafts of diamond dust filtered down to the horizon, a Shadow crept across Groote's vision. He saw a dead face—the face of a woman who might have hoped even as Eleanor had hoped—a woman who was denied. And from behind the Shadow came the echo of Stephen Cantalupe's words: "There is a price to pay, and if there is such a quality as justice you will be made to pay the price."

The Shadow passed with the dramatic suddenness with which it had come. The joy of hope overwhelmed the fear of disappointment. He told the news to Croane, and the old bachelor, taking his hand and gripping it tightly, could do no more than nod, well pleased.

The fortunes of the house of Groote & Croane prospered exceedingly, one of the greatest achievements during the next three months being the engineering of a Brazilian loan. The two men could do nothing wrong in their work, and nearer and nearer for Simeon Groote came the realization of his and Eleanor's great dream. Only to Croane, his best friend, did he confide his hopes, and together those two men mapped out the career of the unborn child.

The first installment of the price mentioned by Stephen Cantalupe was demanded four months after that morning on which Groote told his partner of the coming joy. Something

tragic happened, and exactly three days after Croane had executed a deed at once characteristic and beautiful. He had taken Groote aside, and, with many a nervous gesture, had said:

"Sim, old fellow, last night I did what every man ought to do. I made my will. Would you believe it, I am worth nearly two hundred thousand."

"And no one more fully deserves success, Tony," said Groote. "But let's hope that the reading of the will will take place many a year hence."

"It's a solemn business," said Croane. "I never realized it until I sat down to write it. Do you know, Sim, that I haven't a single relative in the world? At first I thought of leaving the money to your dear wife, Eleanor, in order that she might apply it to one or more of her charities."

"That's like you, Tony," said Groote quietly.

"But on second thought I conceived what I believe to be a bigger idea." He hesitated, and fumbled with his watch chain. "You don't mind my being personal, Sim?"

"Not at all."

"Well, your wife, Eleanor, has never been out of my mind all these years. She's one of those women, Sim, that a man cannot forget. And I swear that my joy was as great as yours when you told me the great news of a few months back. What do you think I've done with my money?"

Groote shook his head vaguely.

"I've bequeathed every penny to the child of Simeon and Eleanor Groote. If I should be alive when the child—boy or girl—is twenty-one, I shall arrange to transfer half of my fortune in order to start it in life. On the other hand, if I should die before the child is born—"

"God forbid it!" Groote murmured.

"I have arranged that the whole of my fortune shall pass to the child when it is a month old. There are other clauses and conditions, Sim, but those I have mentioned are the principal."

At the close of the interview Simeon Groote laughed good-naturedly and

sought Eleanor that he might tell her of Croane's story.

"I would much rather that he had left it to charity," said Groote, "because I should like my boy or girl to realize that what was theirs had been made by their father. And we have plenty, Eleanor—so much, indeed, that sometimes I wonder if we are justified in seeking to make more."

Croane had gone up to the City. Groote was discussing a transaction with a client in his private room when the telephone bell rang violently. He picked up the receiver with an impatient jerk. A member of the Stock Exchange was speaking:

"That you, Mr. Groote? Come up at once. Croane has met with an accident."

Croane was dead. His cab had collided with another in the City.

Further installments of the price were demanded at alarmingly short intervals. The Brazilian loan proved a colossal failure; it cost Groote seventy thousand to get out of it. He kept the news from Eleanor. Not for the world would he have had the serenity of her thoughts disturbed.

A little later a trusted secretary succumbed to the temptations of a rival firm, and let Groote in for a serious commitment. A South African agent whom he believed he could trust led him into financing a mining enterprise, with the result that thirty or forty thousand was blown to the winds. He tried to recover himself by a huge deal in cotton futures, and a plague of blight shook him to his knees. He could do nothing right, and as one failure succeeded another the strong mind became panicky. He commenced to flounder, to plunge, and the more he floundered and the more he plunged the deeper grew the abyss.

Valiantly he strove to summon to his aid his old-time acumen and clarity of thought. But Eleanor met with an accident while stepping from her car, and for a whole week Groote was unable to attend to his business. She was very patient, and did not betray to him the full extent of her sufferings. It was

his trusted medical man who gave him some inkling of the truth. The doctor had called in the study on his way from the sick room, and in answer to Groote's query he said:

"We cannot be too careful, Mr. Groote, and I beg of you not to spare the slightest expense in order to insure her comfort. We could have laughed at an accident of this nature four months ago, but to-day we dare not take the slightest risk. I am consulting Steyburgher—he's one of the very best men that I know of. If you mark any change in her condition summon one of us hastily."

Groote listened to him with eyes half closed. The doctor had moved to the door, but he turned and went back to Groote.

"Of course," he said, "we must not lose sight of the fact that Mrs. Groote was not married until——"

Simeon nodded.

"We have been living on our hopes so long," he muttered lifelessly, "that if anything should happen now——"

"I quite understand," said the doctor sympathetically. "This *one* joy"—he averted his face, and his voice trembled slightly—"the *one* maternal joy that the gods have to spare, Mr. Groote, would have meant so much to both of you. But don't give way. All that is humanly possible shall be done. The thing now is quietude. Whatever you do, don't allow her mind to be disturbed by outside influences."

In the fortnight that followed Simeon Groote would have given his right hand for the sympathy of his wife. Since the day of their marriage she had been everything to him. When business had racked his brain, her voice, her gentle touch, those sweet moments when he sat at her feet, her fingers playing about his forehead—had swept away the pain. Now, when his soul was crying out for sympathy, he must not speak to her. And his castles of finance, stretched across the horizon, were crumbling and falling.

Men on the exchange began to whisper. No matter how wealthy a man was, they argued stealthily, he couldn't

stand the repeated failures that had been Groote's during the last month or so. He must have dropped a quarter of a million, so they calculated, and yet he was still fighting, his back to the wall. They didn't know what he was fighting for. In their time they had seen great giants of finance brought to their knees with crushing blows—they had seen them fall in the dust, and "hammered"; but in the eyes of none of those giants had they seen the look that gleamed from Groote's eyes. It wasn't pain; it wasn't fear. It was something terribly like resignation.

"There is a price to pay——"

The crisis had arrived. The doctors had been hastily summoned. Groote was pacing the floor of his study. That day a last stand had been made. With the dramatic collapse of Mexican Extras the whole of his credit had gone.

"My God!" he groaned, when they brought him the news of the collapse. "This is the end!" The old hand had lost its cunning, the great brain that had evolved financial schemes by which the world was amazed was atrophied. "Beaten to my knees!" he muttered in an undertone. "And she, my patient Eleanor, doesn't know of it. Nothing can save me. I must begin again, and fight my way up the ladder from which I have fallen. I must go back—yes, as a clerk. I must——"

He paused. He was alone in his private room. The clerks in the office without were whispering excitedly. Of a sudden his eyes opened wide. He stared across into the corner of the room. From out of the shadows seemed to come the face of Anthony Croane.

The will! If he could hold out for a month after the birth of the child——

And then he staggered home.

The doctors had warned him. He was waiting. For him the whole world was standing still. There was no sound save one that filtered through to his ears—the sound of the doctors' footsteps in the room above, where Eleanor was fighting her battle.

When the child was a month old!

Steyburgher, the specialist, had bid-

den him hope. "Your wife is a strong woman," he had said, "and I don't think there is any cause for pessimism."

The footfalls were louder now, and they were passing to and fro hurriedly. Groote walked to the door, opened it slightly, and listened. Steyburgher was whispering to the family doctor. Groote went back to the table, placed his elbows upon it, and rested his chin in his hands.

When the child was a month old!

Some one ran downstairs. Groote dared not look around, not even when the door of the study was burst open. All the breath had gone from him. He knew instinctively that something terrible was imminent.

"Groote!" The doctor's hand descended heavily on his shoulder. "We can save one of them—which shall it be?"



## THE LAND OF YESTERDAY

TO the land of the long siesta, where the roses are all born,  
And dreams of peace and plenty haunt the coming of the dawn—  
To the land of the copper sky dome, where the world is kept away,  
I've a longing to be roaming from this busy everyday.

Here they sit beside the casa, 'neath the pimienta's shade,  
And watch the sunset pictures when the day begins to fade—  
Here they never, never hurry, here they worry not at all:  
'Tis mañana de mañana for the young and for the old.

Here they weave the ancient basket into patterns strange and fair,  
Twist the horsehair for reatas, twang the ever-sweet guitar—  
Here they're always making merry, where the skies are gold and blue,  
And 'tis here that I'd be wand'ring, if dreams were ever true.

Children come and grow to manhood, maids are wed and pass away,  
But the dwelling of to-morrow is the home of yesterday—  
The rosebush in the courtyard, with its flames of crimson glow,  
Is the rose tree of the Spaniard of a century ago.

In the land of the long siesta, when the night is soft and still,  
And the serenade an echo, wanders o'er the moonlit hill,  
The jessamine and lilac beckon soft and bid me stray  
Once again amid their beauty, in this land of yesterday.

PERCY F. MONTGOMERY.

# The Little Palace in the Stars



By **GERALD  
VILLIERS-  
STUART**



**O**NCE upon a time there was an elderly man. He lived in America, and the newspapers were fond of saying that he owned it. Really he didn't—only some of the best bits, the best railroads, and the best banks—but the assertion amused the newspapers. They talked about him a great deal, and said very hard things, and called him hard names, such as greedy, and grasping, and domineering. They wondered, too, whether there was the least trace of human feeling wrought into that being of granite and steel. Oh! but they wrote terrible paragraphs about this gray, elderly man, yet secretly they were very proud of him, of the battles that he had fought, and the money that he had made. They referred to him as "a railroad king," and "a Napoleon of finance," and they frequently interviewed him.

The name of the elderly man was Darius Hocking; his face was grim, and gray, and set. It did not do for men to thwart his will—not even at directors' meetings—for he could get angrier than any other director, and turn his anger into terrible, cold words that cut like hailstones on bare flesh. His eyes, too, were terrible when he was thwarted; men could not meet his glance, so he nearly always had his way.

When Darius Hocking walked in the streets, men pointed at him, at his broad shoulders which stooped, and his rough gray hair, which was curiously long,

like an old-fashioned Royal Academician's. It was rather thin on the top of his head, as if his brain had worked through, but it jutted out angrily and aggressively over his forehead. Men caught a glimpse of his face whenever they could, in the hope of reading his mind, for any one who knew the mind of Darius Hocking could have made a great deal of money. I do not think that any man had ever read that face, or won a secret from those tight-drawn lips, or seen the truth in those deep-set eyes, and I think that very few had ever caught the shadow of an unexpected expression that lurked behind them. Not likely, for it was little more than the ghost of a dead hope, the mirage of something that might have been, but never was.

Dim as the first glimmer of a materialization or the last moonbeam of the dawn, it no more marked the titanic design of hard-wrought muscle and deep-etched line which was the face of Darius Hocking than a dewdrop dents a monolith or a butterfly hurts a flower. It was almost as impalpable as the phantom that haunts a house; and perhaps that is what it was, just the ghost of a Darius Hocking that destiny had partly planned, and then abandoned for another design. There may be such a ghost walking the endless corridors of every human brain, manifesting itself in such unexpected ways that it is never recognized.

In the face of Darius Hocking the

ghost appeared in the form of a wistful expression, and, therefore, no one had ever seen it, for who would have believed the evidence of his eyes had they seen this railroad king looking wistful? Who? Ah! yes, I forgot—a loving woman. But, you see, Darius Hocking had never won the love of a woman. At least—but that was many years ago.

It is very certain that Mrs. Hocking had never become cognizant of the wistful look in her husband's eyes. For her the ghost had never walked. She was a good wife, but a downright woman, logical, businesslike, and efficient. She had helped her husband climb, and now she sat upon the summit, shimmering with diamonds, large, and gray, and complacent. She had achieved the dowager look without ever having had any children; perhaps I mean by the dowager look the ability to contribute largely to the front façade of an opera box and to draw attention to that box.

The name of Mrs. Hocking, also, was before the public eye on the society pages of the daily papers—society leader, charity organizations, and all that sort of thing. One dismisses the subject somewhat airily for the very good reason that, in spite of Mrs. Hocking's vast importance in the social fabric of New York, her part in this little drama consists only in having failed to notice the wistful expression in her husband's face; a very small part for such a very large lady, and yet—

Perhaps I ought to apologize for beginning this story with an elderly man, but, after all, fairy stories generally do begin with the king and go on to the princess, and Darius Hocking was a railway king. Of course, being a modern king, he had not a great many sons and daughters; in fact, he had none; but for all that, there is a princess.

In order to get to her quickly, I will merely relate that the time came when Darius Hocking had a serious nervous collapse. It happened in his wife's box at the Metropolitan Opera House; they were doing "Louise" for the first time in New York. This illness made a break in his life, and no end of a break

in stocks and shares. If you could see a post-mortem diagram of the life of Darius Hocking, this break would look like a crack in a mirror, or a fault in a geological formation.

The railway king did not have to abdicate, but he was never again able to work for fourteen hours a day, and three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. Indeed, he always left his kingdom in the hands of regents every spring, and disappeared for two or three months.

Once upon a time, a young man sat in a spring sunbeam, and the sunbeam fell upon a little marble table and an iron chair which stood outside the Restaurant du Gougou, in the Place du Calvaire.

The Place du Calvaire is a little square beneath the Church of Le Sacre Cœur. Say you have been up there in the church, then you reach the little square by walking down the cobblestones of narrow, ancient streets. Say you have been down among the tinsel and the tourists of the Place Pigalle—such an appropriate name—you reach it by leaving the Montmartre of the Paris guide and climbing steps and climbing steps which wind upward, and upward, and upward. The "Pilgrims' Chorus" from the strings of an unearthly orchestra should play one up those steps; then one might feel as Tannhäuser felt when he joined the pilgrimage.

They are many, those steps, but at the top there is that Church of the Sacred Heart; marvelous, incredible, looking as if it had been built by the fairies in the night, built of air and sunshine, floating, hovering high over Paris. Yet it was not built by the fairies, but by the furies, by the yelling mob that made the Terror the Terror; and there it stands, a statue of remorse, built to expiate the sins of a people, the most dramatic act of a dramatic nation in a penitential mood.

It is important in my story, this church, because if it had never been built, the princess would never have climbed the steps, and the young man



who sat in a spring sunbeam outside the tiny Restaurant du Gougou in the Place du Calvaire would never have seen her.

He saw her hair first rising above the topmost step. It was the color of oat straw, and rather riotous; in the hot spring sunshine it looked like little flames. Next he saw her eyes, and, leaning forward eagerly, he thought that they were blue, though he could not be sure because the lashes were so very long and black, and there was such a shadow of weariness beneath them. They were very wistful, not like the fleeting ghosts behind the eyes of Darius Hocking, but openly, sweetly wistful. The young man felt it at once, it made his breath catch, and a little mist pass before his eyes, so that the whole face of the princess was above the topmost step before the mist drifted on.

The young man saw that it was what artists call the golden face—small, with a pointed chin, and faintly tinted, beneath the pinks and whites, with a dim, golden radiance. He noticed that her nose was rather childish, and that her mouth had a pathetic droop, as foreshadowed by her eyes.

The young man was madly in love with the face of the princess before the whole of her, carrying in her little hand a motor bonnet, had climbed the last step; for in some mysterious way their eyes had become entangled. Also, his hands grew restless and swept imaginary brushes across imaginary canvas, because he was an artist, and longed to paint that face. It seemed to the young man to have risen out of the earth as miraculously as things happen in fairy tales.

When she stood on the topmost step and in the Place du Calvaire, the young man saw that she was not alone, that a stout, elderly man was puffing and perspiring at her side. He had thrust his feet apart like an overdriven horse, and when he blew, he made a noise like a groom currying one. His face was red and annoyed, for he was a pompous man, and objected to puffing and blowing in public.

"Great nonsense, Viola! Great non-

sense!" he snorted, and leaned against the railing. "Plenty of churches in Paris, in sensible places, too, without climbing these abominable steps."

"But I could have come by myself, father," the young man heard her answer. "I wanted to come by myself; can't I ever go anywhere by myself?"

"Certainly not!"

The little mouth quivered pathetically, and the eyes looked more wistful than ever. "Not even to church?"

"I don't count these places as churches—objects of interest, possibly—though I will say for it that that one up there"—he pointed up with his umbrella—"has a dome the same shape as St. Paul's Cathedral."

"Then can't I go there alone, father, and you rest here? There are more steps, and they are not good for you. Doctor Haines said that you were to be careful of steps. You can sit at one of those dear little tables in front of that fascinating little Restaurant du Gougou! What an enchanting name!"

"Nonsense, Viola! It is little better than a public house. I am not in the habit of sitting in front of public houses."

"Of course, not in England, father, but this is Paris, and everything is different."

"Principles are principles everywhere, and people in our position should set an example."

"Of course, father, of course," she replied wearily; "but you would like to sit down, I am sure you ought to sit down."

"But the fact that I should like to sit down is not a reason for doing so when my sense of duty urges a contrary course."

"But, look here, father"—the girl's face suddenly glowed with inspiration—"there are several people sitting at those little tables, and they are all drinking brandy or, perhaps, absinth; now, if you sat down and ordered lemonade in a loud voice, wouldn't that be a good example? You must say citronade, so that they'd all understand and feel ashamed of themselves. You might have two, to show how much you en-

joy it, and while you are drinking them, I'll run up to the church that has a dome like St. Paul's Cathedral."

Now the young artist heard every word of this conversation. In some mysterious way he seemed to be included. Perhaps it was because the girl, while she was arguing with her father, was thinking of him all the time, and wondering why she found his face so interesting, and deciding that it must be because it was alive with dreams. She wondered what were the dreams, and if they were at all like her own, and whether he was English or American. American, most likely, because his face was high-boned and lean like an Indian chief's; but he had daring, irresponsible eyes, so perhaps he was Irish.

Yes, he felt included in the drama which was going on in the little sun-washed square, and awaited eagerly the result of the princess' plea. Suppose, he thought, she was allowed to go up to the church alone, was there any reason why he, too, should not go to church? None whatever!

Almost as eagerly as the girl, he awaited the effect of lemonade on the pompous man's principles. Why had she not suggested iced lemonade? The man's tongue was almost hanging out; the word "ice" would have clinched the matter. He yearned to prompt her.

An inspiration! "Garçon, garçon, have you any ice?" He said it in French, and he said it in English, very loudly, and he dwelt on the important word. Would she take the hint? The darling, the clever darling! she would—and threw a grateful glance in the prompter's direction.

"Oh, father, just think! Ice! Iced lemonade! It will go clink, clink against the sides of the glass, and the brandy drinkers will hear it and envy you, and—who knows?—never drink brandy again."

Now or never; it could not have been put more strongly, the entente cordiale of thirst and principles; against them only obstinacy. Eagerly, tensely, as a prisoner awaits the judge's sentence, the young man and the girl await the result; he, craning forward from his little

round table, she, looking up with those pathetic, wistful eyes into the large, red face above. The fussy little garçon, hurrying with ice, makes a delicious noise at the right moment, and earns a tip. A cool, tinkling bell rings in the large man's brain, and promises peace to his throat. Slowly, ponderously, the flag of obstinacy is hauled down.

"Hum—well, there is something, Viola, in what you say—the force of example—hum—and, after all, it is very much like the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. But not long! mind that—"

The girl was almost around the corner as her father spoke, flying beyond the reach of minds that change, hurrying by the quaint, old, many-shuttered houses of the narrow little streets; then through another tiny square, where children played, and elderly women, in black, knitted shawls, sat knitting other shawls; along another street with hardly any houses—outcropping rocks instead, and trees of a lovely April radiance—and so to the steps of the *Sacre Cœur*, and into that high-vaulted place of splendors and glooms, of dim music, solemn hushes, and bursts of sound, of fragrant twilight stabbed by candles.

The girl stood for a moment enthralled by the look of innocent, unquestioning faith in the eyes of some little girls who were doing "the stations of the cross," chanting on their knees, in sweet unison, to the beat of their teacher's forefinger. She watched them for a moment, then, as if she were betraying some sacred mission, hurried forward, with eager, searching eyes, toward the far-off altar.

Virtue is usually its own reward—vice certainly acknowledges the fact with a sneer—but sometimes it is rewarded more lavishly, and here is an instance: The father of our princess—his name was Mr. Sims, and he hailed from Manchester—had consumed barely the half of his first glass of citronade, had distributed only one "See-what-a-good-boy-I-am" glance among the other patrons of the *Restaurant du Gougou*,

when he was overjoyed to observe the force of example working strenuously.

A youth with daring, irresponsible eyes, picking up his *petit verre* of cognac, emptied it, ostentatiously and with extreme deliberation, upon the gravel. Then, in a loud voice, he demanded to be supplied with citronade. The grim face of Mr. Sims relaxed into the nearest approach to a beatific smile of which it was capable. How right he had been to mingle with publicans and sinners! Yet he vaguely resented the fact that to his daughter belonged the credit of suggesting the plan that had worked so beneficently. He rather hoped, now, that Viola would take her time up yonder, since half an hour, at least, could be profitably spent at his present occupation.

There was only one feature of the conversion that filled him with regret. The young man should have consumed his lemonade slowly and deliberately, for the edification of all; instead of which, he gulped it down with extraordinary rapidity, paid his "addition," and hurried away.

There you are, there is the virtue! And now for the reward!

It is one thing for a young man to follow the magnet of a young woman's eyes, quite another to summon up the courage to do more than take another furtive look at them; but when the eyes are looking around with adorable helplessness, showing that their owner is in difficulty, then it is quite another affair.

Our princess was in a most obvious difficulty. The young man with the daring, irresponsible eyes—his name was Neville, Denny Neville—discovered her trying to explain something to a kindly old priest who, unable to understand her boarding-school French, was about to turn away with a despairing gesture. There, you see, was Denny Neville's reward; for any one may offer his services as interpreter, and any one may accept such a service, may pay the interpreter with the price-less coin of a grateful smile.

It was all very pathetic, the young man discovered. The girl's desire to

go alone to the church had been no sudden whim. Denny Neville had to be admitted into a confidence so sweetly sacred, so tenderly tragic, that he felt it a sacrilege because he had lightly followed those wistful eyes. He understood now that this moment in the *Sacre Cœur* was the result of plans, and managements, and dangerous secrecies. The little scene with her father in the *Place du Calvaire* illuminated for Denny Neville the paths she must have trod to achieve this goal; all the way from Manchester to Paris, the poor little eager will pitting itself against that heavy personality, setting inertia in motion, overcoming prejudice, coaxing, pleading, or cheating, as the necessity arose. She had been like a little bird fluttering joyously, with a broken heart, to lure a pilfering boy from its nest.

It was this way—as Denny's imaginative mind reconstructed the story from the girl's agitated words: Her mother had been a Roman Catholic, but had renounced her religion to please Mr. Sims' Nonconformist views, and make their house a house of peace. A busy life had followed, a Protestant environment, no time for doubts or fears; then the shadow of death, the slow, threatening approach of the great test, long weeks in bed with time to brood, the resurrection of ancient, hereditary instincts and dreads; then terror, and panic, and wild, vain prayers to her well-meaning husband—who understood nearly everything except states of mind—to allow her to see a priest; from the best, and kindest, and most logical of motives, a stern refusal; the adoring daughter, young enough to understand states of mind, taken into her confidence, a priest nearly smuggled into the house; then her father's unexpected return, a terrible scene, the priest, who could also understand states of mind, departing in helpless tears; after that, a wild moment burned deeply into the young girl's soul, a revelation of the awful fears that haunted the dying woman.

She believed, mediocrally, that a child, under such circumstances, could make

its parent's confession, could be sent as a delegate of peace to those who could talk to God. There was that church, high over Paris, given by a nation to expiate the sins of a nation; there was that statue of the priest holding out the miniature of the church wistfully to God. It was there that the daughter was to make her mother's confession. A hundred pounds were smuggled into the girl's possession; she was to expend them in the *Sacre Cœur* on masses for the tortured soul.

Standing by the statue, the girl produced the money, the same English notes and sovereigns which her mother's dying hands had hung about her neck in a little bag.

The old priest spoke slowly, so that the girl could understand. It was all very unusual; she was not of their church, he understood, never would be, nor the young man who spoke for her; yet they were in earnest, he could see that. It was all very terrible, too, but let her take courage; the church would accept the dying woman's charge, her child need be haunted no more by her mother's fears. God was very good, and then there was the Mother of God, who understands states of mind. He laid his hand for a moment on the girl's head, and then left her alone with Denny Neville.

They looked at each other rather helplessly. They had shared a moment of high emotion; but what next? It is easier, sometimes, to look than to speak, and their eyes had already formed the habit of getting entangled, but at last the young man said: "Shall we go outside and sit down?"

"I'd like to, very much," answered the girl simply.

It took some time, even when they sat in the sunshine of a little square beneath the church, to pass from under the shadow of the emotional moment that had broken down so completely all the barriers between them. They sat rather far apart on the bench, but the old women in black shawls, who sat in the sun knitting other shawls, felt the glow of a new-born love thrilling in the square, and nodded sagely to one an-

other before they went on with their work.

"Oh, if you knew how much happier I am!" murmured the girl. "I thought I'd never be able to do what—all that my mother asked. I have been so afraid for two whole years, but now I feel that my mother's soul—I wonder if you can understand—I might have failed at the last moment if——"

"Why, of course I understand. It was a great privilege—I mean your allowing me to help. It has all been very wonderful, a revelation; that sort of thing does a man good."

"But you know I am grateful? I am very tired, and I can't think of the right words to make you feel it."

"Please, please, don't try and"—the girl had risen—"please don't go! Not yet!"

"I must. My father——"

"May I see you again?" Neville had risen reluctantly, and asked the question with vivid eagerness.

"You want to see me again? Why?" asked the girl wonderingly.

"Don't ask questions like that. I might answer as a man hasn't the right to answer in the first ten minutes of—of a friendship. But you haven't answered. How can I see you again?"

The girl looked troubled. "I don't know, unless——" Her face brightened with sudden inspiration. "Are you a lord?"

"A lord!" Neville looked puzzled. "Gracious, no. I'm an American—from Baltimore—you know."

"Oh-h," she murmured dolefully, and her mouth for a moment drooped pathetically; then she cheered up, inspired by a fresh hope. "But perhaps you are very rich. Are you very rich?"

Neville looked more puzzled than ever at the eager little face asking questions so dreadfully material, so at variance with his conception of her personality.

"Rich! Oh, I don't know. I have twenty-five hundred dollars—at least, I had; I've spent some of it. But I have heaps of pictures. You see, I'm an artist."

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Then father

will never let you see me again. If you were a lord, or rich, he mightn't mind your being an artist. Of course," she hastened to add, "I'd rather you were an artist than anything. I felt you must be something nice like that."

"Then you'd like to see me again?"

"Oh, yes, very much."

"Then you could manage it."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, your father is setting a good example at this very moment to the habitués of the Restaurant du Gougou, isn't he?"

"You heard?"

"I couldn't help it; you spoke very distinctly."

"Anyway," said the girl dolefully, "we are leaving Paris to-morrow. Do you ever come to Manchester?"

"Good gracious, no! I mean," he added hurriedly, "I'd like to, of course."

"We live outside. I hate it, but I like this place. I wish I lived here."

"I wish you did. I love it, too, and I do live here. Do you see that door?" He pointed up a tiny street to a door in a wall that made of the street a cul-de-sac. The door was studded with nail heads and very battered; it looked as if the butts of halberds had dented it hundreds of years ago. Through the door, which was slightly open, the girl could see an old iron lamp that surely must have lit up the carnage of St. Bartholomew; beyond that again, she caught a glimpse of lilacs.

"Why, it's a garden!" she cried.

"No, it's a wilderness or a kingdom, and I have a palace there."

"How lovely!" The girl's mind wandered through the door, and she blushed slightly. "But I must run. My father—"

"May I write to you?"

"It would be very nice."

"But—"

"Oh, it's on this." She took a card out of her case and handed it to him.

"And you'll answer?"

"Of course, I'll answer."

"Look! Look!" Neville touched the girl's arm and pointed excitedly. "There goes 'the Lilac Man of Mystery.'"

"You mean that old artist, the one with the flaring, black tie, and the soft, black hat in his hand, and the broad, stooped shoulders?"

"Yes. I call him 'the Lilac Man of Mystery' because he comes and goes with the lilacs. He has the other studio in my kingdom. It's locked up all the rest of the year. Nobody knows his name even."

The old artist turned at the door. The girl received a very clear impression of his face. He had rough, gray hair, rather long behind, but thin on the top, as if his brain had worked through; it jutted out angrily and aggressively over his forehead. His face was hard and lined.

"Poor old man!" said the girl tenderly. "What wistful eyes he has!"

Whole bottles of ink drained dry, pens worn to a splutter, writing paper and envelopes, blotters and stamps in the utmost profusion, these were the material messengers between Paris and Manchester. But what of the messages, what of the soul of the written word? At first the messages were formal enough, as the two young things groped their way one toward the other. That could not last long, for love, like the planets, is always in motion, progressing or retrograding. Besides, was there not always the memory of those intimate moments in the Church of the Sacre Cœur? Then it was not only Denny Neville's eyes that were daring and irresponsible. I fear so, for in less time than I would like to state, letters of the most ardent, with little pictures of old Montmartre sketched all across the top, were pouring into Manchester, and darling, shy little answers were being delivered at the tiny cottage among the lilacs that gazed down on Paris.

Perhaps it was because those letters were wistful, like the eyes of the writer; perhaps it was because Baltimore is rather far south, and Denny Neville's temperament was a little south of that again. Anyway, on a day that had brought a sweeter letter than usual, Denny suddenly threw down his

brushes, kissed the letter, told himself that the Manchester smoke would develop his sense of atmosphere, that one ticket was cheaper than many postage stamps, and that, anyhow, he was going to see that face again, even if he walked and swam, threw some things into a suit case, and away with him to Manchester.

By rights, the princess of this tale should have lived in a palace, but as that would never have suited Mr. Sims, she lived in its modern equivalent—a large, red-brick structure, pinnacled, domed, and cohéred. Not exactly a palace, but at any rate referred to in the local press as "the palatial home of John Sims, esquire."

John Sims, esquire, spent the days at a factory, encouraging several thousand people to convert for his benefit bales of cotton into bolts of printed cloth; and I regret to say that Denny Neville took advantage of this fact and spent the day, or a good part of it, at Mr. Sims' palatial home. He spent the third day with his arms around the slender form of Mr. Sims' only daughter; and about the fourth, she took her arms from around his neck long enough to say incredulously, "What, ask father if you can marry me! I know you are brave, Denny, darling, but you'd never dare!" And he answered quite jauntily: "Oh, I don't mind. It's one of those things that have got to be done, and I've always thought that an angry parent would be rather a good subject for a picture. Of course, he'll refuse."

"Of course, but he won't do it nicely. You don't know father."

"Not by heart, beloved, yet I can imagine his point of view. I can even sympathize. Fancy losing a darling like you! But I will be firm."

"Oh, Denny, this will be the end! I'll never be allowed to see you again."

"Oh, won't you, though? This will be the beginning. I can marry you then with a clear conscience, and take you away to reign in my kingdom for ever, and ever, and ever. The interview with your father is a mere formality, a concession to diplomatic usage. I'll be very nice to him, and perhaps

he will remember it to me for righteousness that I allowed myself to be swayed by his good example at the Restaurant du Gougou."

The interview took place at Mr. Sims' office, and was brief, but apoplectic. Denny Neville started badly by saying, "I am an artist, but not a penniless artist, I have five hundred pounds—at least, I had, but I've spent some of it."

"And how much of this great fortune might you have spent, sir?" queried Mr. Sims, with all the malignant calm of a sarcastic cabman.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Denny grandly. "I have never counted." It was then that the scene became apoplectic, and Denny Neville became educated on the subject of Mr. Sims' views as to artists—especially American artists—and Yankee cheek, paupers, fortune hunters, and swindlers—especially American swindlers.

So Denny Neville married his Viola with a clear conscience, in a registry office, and took her to live in his tiny cottage among the lilacs. Mr. Sims scratched his daughter's name out of the family Bible, changed his will, and did all the other things natural to a British parent incensed. He was particularly incensed because he was obliged to abandon his dreams of an alliance with a British peer.

But his daughter cared for none of these things, for she had married her prince, and he had transported her on a magic carpet to a palace. That is what they called it; and because it was so very high up over Paris, they always referred to it as "the Little Palace in the Stars."

How pleasant to write down here the enchanting words: "And they lived happily ever after!" In a way, they would be true words, for even when the bread and cheese was all eaten, and nothing was left but the kisses, they were not really unhappy. Their love was so wonderful a possession that it never seemed possible it could share the fate of Denny Neville's little fortune—the one he had never counted—and come to an end.



Blame him if you like, you cautious ones, for involving such a girl as Viola in poverty; censure him for failing to count the cost, for trusting to luck and the future; but remember that the whole world is peopled by the descendants of those who have trusted to luck and the future. Careful people care for the future, but the future does not care a hang for careful people.

They were not extravagant, these lovers; the rent of "the Little Palace in the Stars" was low, and Viola soon became learned in cooking. They even kept chickens among the lilacs—each one named after a famous actress—and their only extravagance was dinner at a little restaurant whose windows looked sheer down on the lights of Paris. Sitting at one of those windows, they could imagine that they had soared above all the constellations, planets, suns, and comets, could see them twinkling far below. The name of this restaurant I must never divulge. I will call it, as they called it, "the Restaurant of the Last Star."

If Denny Neville had ever counted, he would have discovered that half his fortune had been spent before his marriage. Viola counted, and decided that they could live for two years on what was left; perhaps three, if—she always stopped there, but Denny knew what she meant. They did not even go to the theater, or to the opera, much as they loved music. They said that they heard much more wonderful music in the Church of the Sacre Cœur.

They were young, and they had to dance, and no one ever invited them to dances, but there was the Moulin de Galéte a little way down the hill, and there—at fifty centimes for the lady, a franc for the cavalier, and ten centimes for his walking stick—they could dance on a perfect floor to a splendid band, in an atmosphere of joyous youth. On Sunday, out of sheer sentiment, they always took their coffee after déjeuner at the Restaurant du Gougou in the Place du Calvaire.

"The Lilac Man of Mystery" was a source of endless interest to the rulers of the kingdom to which he came. They

were always surprising each other with new theories on the subject. He was the Wandering Jew, he was an anarchist, an author, a famous artist in disguise, a foreign potentate, the last of the Bourbons, a missing grand duke of Austria. He could not be a lover, they decided, on account of his years; besides, no woman ever came in or out of the mysterious cottage.

"But why the wistful look in his eyes?" asked Viola. She was very observant, and noticed that sometimes he walked up to the cottage as if he were youth itself, his face alive with dreams, as one who was about to achieve some splendid ambition. What puzzled her was this: On one such day he came out of the cottage another man; gone from his head the soft, black hat, from his neck the flaring tie, gone from his face the dreams, the hopes, the ambitions. Dressed with businesslike precision, he savagely banged the door behind him and, locking it, strode away, sadly stooped about the shoulders, yet with some fierce purpose breaking through the sadness. Denny had come to know that, after such an entrance and exit, he would not see "the Man of Mystery" again until the lilacs bud-ded afresh.

"Poor old man!" Viola sighed as she watched him pass under the ancient lamp and out through the medieval door in the wall.

"Keep your pity for me, sweetheart. I feel just about like that myself."

"Not—"

"Yes, rejected again; the Salon will have none of me."

"But what fools, what beasts! My poor darling!" Viola, with her arms flung round the neck of the rejected one, made him understand that such genius as his was beyond the vision of the committee.

Now, of course, all young artists whose pictures have been rejected by a great national exhibition feel that they have received the final proof of their genius—they are only human, so why should they not part reluctantly with their dreams? Denny Neville, however, really had genius, only its

manifestations were not in the fashion of the moment.

There was at that period a cult of ugliness; the young artist who wished to be thought clever must be able to shut his eyes to the beauty of the world, and to dip his brush in grime. Denny Neville, whose optimistic eyes could never find any grime or see the ugly side of the world, who was more given to idealizing beauty than to realizing squalor, found himself swimming against the fashionable current of the moment.

"It will be all right next year," he said bitterly. "I'll paint something stark and ugly; I'll out-squalor their squalor."

Viola could be quite a little firebrand when she was roused. "How dare you say such a thing?" she flared up at him, quivering with indignation. "Don't you know that we are dwellers in the stars? What right have you to photograph the earth when——"

"When I have you for a subject, and the stars for a background? I know, darling, but they don't buy pictures up here, and I can't let you starve."

"If you are not you, you'll starve my heart, and soul, and brain, you'll drag the stars from my sky. No, we'll give up the Restaurant du Gougou, the Moulin de Galète, and 'the Restaurant of the Last Star'; the hens shall lay more eggs, and we'll hold out another year. You 'shall paint on a ten-league canvas with brushes of comet's hair! You shall *épater* the artists! You shall paint something ten times more beautiful than before!"

"Then I'll paint you, dear, when you are angry."

"No," she murmured softly, "you shall paint our love, and some way I seem to know that so our love shall be saved."

"And we'll call it," cried the artist enthusiastically, "we'll call it——"

They cried out the name in unison, for they shared the vision:

"The Little Palace in the Stars!"

That year they came to know the

emotions of those beleaguered in a city or wrecked on a desert isle—three-quarter rations, half rations, the scanning of the horizon for ships and armies of relief, the fear of not being able to hold out. They knew that their picture was going to be wonderful, but would the Salon accept the wonder, and would it find a buyer quickly? Oh, it would have to be very quickly! They had almost conquered the winter, that terror of the poor; the spring was reaching its arm above the horizon—surely they could win through.

"Two years!" they had calculated, "and three if——" Well, the spring brought the "if"—and everything was different.

They could be proud for themselves, they could starve for themselves, but the "if" had rights, and would have a wealthy grandfather. They swallowed their pride, and Viola wrote to Manchester.

Manchester would take her back, would restore her name to the family Bible, but—the cruelty of it, the impossibility of the condition!—alone she must return, her husband she must renounce. "Never! Never!! Never!!!" They clung together and cried the words aloud; but in the silence of their hearts they knew that unless the picture sold, Manchester would win.

The picture was finished; they would stand by the hour and gaze upon it, wondering was there anything to be changed. Viola would kiss it, and caress it, and whisper to it: "Ship of our hopes, you must save us, you must speak for us to the world, you must soften the hearts of the committee; you must tell them our story, and how Denny and I love one another, and how we will be parted if they are unkind to you. When you are hung, you must call out to the buyers, you must beckon them away from ugly cleverness to beautiful genius. 'Little Palace in the Stars,' we have given you a soul. You are our message to the world; a secret we have whispered."

Very often Viola would steal into the Church of the Sacre Cœur; she found that it was a good place in which to

pray. She had rather a pagan heart, and all a pagan's mystical fervor.

She was sure that their picture had a soul, part of hers and part of Denny's. Indeed, it had all the radiance that we associate with spirit life. A picture of light, some would have said, but light that had taken form. There was a man and a girl—or their spirits, for they only glimmered in the light that might have been from a window or from a star high up above the other stars; there was the suggestion of a building outlined in darkness below the window; behind the figures, a suggestion of an interior, magnificent as a palace in a fairy tale.

The man and the girl stood at the window hand in hand. They gazed down upon the other stars, or they gazed down upon the lights of Paris; anyway, they gazed down upon their kingdom. Some of the stars were certainly lighted windows, and were inhabited. Indeed, I think that any one who had seen Paris by night, standing beneath the *Sacre Cœur*, would have known that they were looking southward over the city. There was even a lake of light coming from some open space—perhaps the *Place Pigalle*, for there was a suggestion of evil things wriggling in those rays, like microbes in a tube. All these stars or lights floated in a rosy glow. And that was the picture.

They launched their ship of hope and waited, in a quiver of suspense, for the verdict of the committee. While they waited, they amused themselves by conveying little things from their palace to the pawnshop. I really mean it—amused themselves—for there is humor even in the *mont-de-piété*.

Then it was the turn of the faithful, hard-working hens, each one named after a famous actress. Denny said that they were going on tour, and took them away in a basket. "Madame Réjane" and the magnificent "Chanticleer" were the only ones left when the letter came.

They sat facing each other across a table in the studio; the letter lay unopened between them. They had been

very brave while their ship of hope was on the seas. Now their faces were white and drawn with dread, for they no longer owned a ship of hope. Either the ship was safe in port, or it was wrecked—they were afraid to know.

At last Denny squared his shoulders, tried to assume a nonchalant smile, and reached out his hand for the letter. As he did so, Viola fell forward across the table. She had fainted from over-suspense.

Denny carried his wife to a lounge by the open window, unloosed her collar, kissed her white lips, and came back to the table. If the ship of hope was wrecked, he would have time to set his face in order before Viola recovered consciousness. He opened the letter.

"Wake up, darling! Wake up!" Denny knelt by his wife's side, and the joy that radiated from his voice penetrated to her spirit, and her spirit told her heart, and her heart sent the blood on its course once more. She threw her arms feebly around her husband's neck. "I always knew it would be accepted. I always said so, didn't I, dear?"

"Of course, we never doubted it for a moment," he answered, with conviction.

They were standing by the window now. They had fallen unconsciously into the attitude of the man and the girl in the picture. "And we don't doubt," went on Viola, "that some one will buy 'The Little Palace in the Stars' the very first day of the exhibition, do we, dear?"

"Of course we don't."

"Oh, look! Look! The lilacs must be going to flower," she cried. "Here comes 'the Man of Mystery.'"

The old man, a little grayer, a little more stooped, his face a little harder, came down the pathway through the lilacs; he was dressed with the neat precision of a business man. Stopping in front of the dilapidated little red-tiled cottage, where the Nevilles lived, he took a key from his pocket. As if that key had unlocked a chamber of dreams, his face suddenly changed, took on a rapt expression, was transfigured by some exciting ambition. Then, as he

approached the door of his own cottage across the way, another change.

"Poor old man!" murmured Viola. "He looks more wistful than ever."

"Poor! I wonder if he's as poor as we are?"

"I wish he were as happy."

Easter was late, and the spring was early, horse-chestnut trees in the Champs Elysées were very nearly in flower, great white magnolias magnificently so. The flags in front of the Salon waved languidly in the tingling Parisian sunshine, and the Easter visitors, drinking it in as they rolled by in the wheeled procession, felt that they were getting their money's worth.

A man and a girl who had emerged from the Champs Elysées Metro' walked beneath the chestnut trees with the blithe movements of those who tread on air. The man carried an artist's wooden case in his hand, the girl a silk duster, for it was the day of "*le Vernissage*" at the Salon, and Denny Neville and his wife were on their way to the great moment of their lives; the moment when, standing on a little ladder, Denny would administer to his great work the last loving rites before the public were admitted to the privilege of the private view. That would be another great day, but of lesser magnitude than this. To-day, he would stand on a ladder and touch his picture lovingly, and the artists from many lands, the art critics, and the *cognoscenti* would see the artist and his art together. It would be an audience of his peers, of experts whose praise or censure would make or unmake his reputation.

Denny stood in the queue and eventually was handed his tickets; Viola sat on a table and proudly watched him, giving him a smile now and then to keep up his courage, for if it was a moment of triumph, it was also a moment of trial. The doorkeeper bowed to them as they entered, then they were in the great hall of statues; some of them, not yet freed from their ghostly wrappings, looked like vast white mummies. The lovers floated up the stair-

case, and all about them in that throng—many garbed in artistic eccentricities—was an atmosphere of subdued excitement.

They moved straight to the Salle IV., where "The Little Palace in the Stars" was waiting to meet them again. They were rather late, having lingered over déjeuner at the Restaurant du Gougou—déjeuner furnished by Madame Réjane and Chanticleer, who had changed hands for the purpose.

They had reached Salle IV., but where was the picture? And what a crowd about some one else's picture, and about an elderly man on a little ladder, whose back was strangely familiar, though draped in an artist's smock! They could see that he was lovingly dusting the glass of a picture, and drinking in the words of the little crowd around him.

Drawn by the magnet of a crowd, they approached and heard the words of critical approval which the elderly man was drinking in: "Good! Really good!" "Oh yes, if you like that sort of thing!" "But it appeals!" "Oh, yes, it appeals; it has atmosphere, it is atmosphere." "What a strange subject for an old man to choose! One would say it was the conception of youth and ardor." "An unknown man, and at that age, how strange!" "*Le Petit Palais dans les Etoiles!*"

"Monsieur!" It was Denny Neville's voice that rang out, unpleasant to hear, charged with anger. The little crowd turned to him; they saw his face working convulsively. The elderly artist on the little ladder also turned; his face was transfigured with the joy that visits a face only once in all its life. It wore the rapt expression of one who floats high on clouds, of dreams fulfilled, ambitions realized. He was dressed in the extreme artistic convention—a smock, a flaring, black tie, a wide, soft, black hat; he had a white silk scarf in his hand, with which he gently touched the canvas.

"Oh!" cried Viola wildly. "It is 'the Lilac Man of Mystery'! But what is the matter, Denny? Why do you call to him so—so angrily?"

"Don't you see? No, of course you can't, you're too small—he has taken possession of our picture, he has stolen from us our moment! The impostor! Monsieur!" he demanded again, and in his excitement he spoke English, "how dare you pretend that is your picture, how dare you take to yourself—"

"Oh, hush, Denny; look at his face!" Viola laid her hand imploringly on her husband's quivering arm, and Denny looked, and the angry words died away on his lips.

It was as if something wonderful, almost supernatural, had been reflected in a mirror, and some one had thrown a stone and shattered that mirror. The elderly man on the little ladder drew his hands down over his eyes, like a somnambulist suddenly awakened. The glory departed from his face; chagrin, sorrow, and despair took its place.

The little crowd whispered to one another: "What is all this? What does it mean?"

Another change came over the features of the elderly man; he squared back his shoulders, a fighting look came into his face; he seemed to be bracing himself to meet a disastrous situation, force was gathering behind his deep-set eyes even as he descended from the ladder. He came straight to Denny Neville.

"I think, sir," he said hoarsely, "that you are an American."

"Yes. Well!"

"You are also a gentleman. You can gain nothing by humiliating me, though I admit the right; a scene can do you no good. May I speak to you alone? You won't regret it."

"Really, sir"—there was still plenty of anger in Denny's voice—"under the circumstances, and considering—" The crowd listened expectantly; the French love little dramas.

"Do as he asks," Viola clutched her husband's sleeve.

"Very well," growled Denny, like a dog that has been called off.

"Shall we sit down here?" "The Lilac Man of Mystery" indicated a settee in the middle of the room. The three of them sat down.

"In the first place"—the elderly man was master of his voice now, and behind it was the ordered force of a disciplined intellect—"I know it does not excuse my action—I want that picture. I'll buy it. You can name your own price. You understand?—any price—it doesn't matter."

He noticed Denny Neville's incredulous eyes taking in his costume. "Oh, that"—he gave a bitter little laugh—"my make-up—you need not worry, I can pay. It is the only thing I can do. No, madam, I'm not a lunatic." He caught a look of pity in Mrs. Neville's face and interpreted the look correctly. "I have done a crazy thing, but I am sane enough. I am Darius Hocking."

"What a nice name!" said Mrs. Neville soothingly.

"My name is Neville," growled Denny impatiently.

"So you have never heard of Darius Hocking? Some folks," he added bitterly, "would say that you are lucky. You don't read the American papers."

"Can't afford them," said Denny.

The elderly man took a New York draft from his pocket; it was payable to the order of Darius Hocking, and the amount was ten thousand dollars. He indorsed the draft with a fountain pen and handed it to Denny. "I don't know the price of your picture, sir, and I don't care, but I tender this as a payment on account."

Denny gazed blankly at the bit of paper. His mind had not as yet adjusted itself to the whirl of the kaleidoscope. "It is the best picture here," went on the businesslike voice. "I'll make you an offer. If it's not good enough, say so. I'll pay you the top price of the year; if there's a picture sold for a million francs, yours will fetch the same. Is it a bargain?"

"We are saved!" Viola clung to her husband's arm. "Why don't you speak, Denny, why don't you dance? I needn't leave you, I needn't go back to Manchester. We can buy back all our things, perhaps even Madame Réjane and Chanticleer. We can dine every night at 'the Restaurant of the Last

Star,' and we can——" She began to cry.

Darius Hocking looked uncomfortable. "I owe you an explanation. I can't make it here—will you come with me to the place where I can?"

"Yes," said Denny vaguely. "Yes, of course."

Mrs. Denny dried her eyes with the white silk duster, and all three rose and walked through the picture-lined rooms toward the staircase; suddenly Viola turned back, climbed the little ladder in front of the picture, and, careless of the spectators, kissed it impetuously. "Dear 'Little Palace in the Stars'!" she cried. "You have saved us. Good-by."

Outside the Salon, Darius Hocking called a motor taxi and directed the driver to "*l'escalier, Montmartre*." He spoke never a word in the taxi, nor in the little funicular-railway car that carried them up to the summit. In silence he conducted them to the ancient gateway of their own lilac kingdom, unlocked the door of his dilapidated red-tiled cottage, and ushered them into a studio.

There were easels standing about, on each a blank canvas—no, not on all, one contained a canvas splashed with a meaningless random of color. There were palettes, squeezed tubes, brushes, paint boxes, maul sticks, and, over everything, dust, much dust.

Darius Hocking threw his soft, black hat under a table, removed his smock, and tucked his flaring, black tie into the opening of a tweed waistcoat. But still he did not speak. He seemed to expect that his guests should read for themselves. They looked wonderingly around the dusty room, trying to solve the mystery, but they looked sadly, because the room was haunted by the ghost of a tragedy, and they were conscious of its presence.

At last Viola spoke sorrowfully: "I think I understand. A dream has died in this room."

"Something like that," answered Darius Hocking grimly; "it is the mausoleum of a man who never lived. I am known as the hardest man in

America. There was another Darius Hocking, but he wasn't allowed to live. He wanted to be an artist when he was a boy. They let him dream for one year in Paris, but his father had a bank, and he was the only son. They made him return to New York, and they killed his dream, but its ghost walked. They call me the hardest man in America. Well, this is why. It was my revenge on the world for the murder that was done. Power! It's the greatest anodyne. I wanted to paint on canvas, they made me paint the face of a continent." The dramatic instinct of a creator was speaking through Darius Hocking. "Railways! I've built them; legislatures! I've bought 'em; banks, trust companies, insurance companies—some say I've stolen them. There's a fine splash of color from coke ovens at night. You can paint the sky itself with a blast furnace. Oh, it's art, in a way, but it wasn't my dream."

Viola's tender heart was bleeding into tears. Denny came up to Darius Hocking. "We understand, sir. You need not go on."

"Understand! You can't understand it all; you're too young, too damned young. Let me talk, for once. I've been mad to-day, mad and happy, for once, and I'm going to talk. I stole your moment, I'm artist enough to understand what I stole to-day—something I can't pay for with all my money."

"Oh, but I'm glad you stole it!" sobbed Viola. "I always wanted to see your face without that wistful look, and to-day on the ladder I saw."

"Where have you seen me before?" demanded the millionaire.

"We live opposite," answered Denny.

"We have watched you often," said Viola; "we called you 'the Lilac Man of Mystery'; we thought you were poor—we were sorry for you, because we were so happy."

"Sorry, were you? Well, I don't know—at times, when I came to this cottage, I was almost happy. There was a girl, a student she was—it's nearly fifty years ago. We were to have lived in this cottage and painted. There were



days when I walked through that old door when I could make myself believe that all the things I stand for at home were the dreams, and I'd wake up to find myself an artist—an artist!" He thundered out so suddenly that Viola shrank away. "That and that girl and this cottage were all I ever wanted, and I've been handed a hundred million dollars instead. I stood it for over forty years, and then one night—I was in my wife's box at the opera—New York, I mean—they gave 'Louise.' I could almost recognize this cottage in the second act. Something broke in my brain."

"In your heart," whispered Viola.

"Don't let them hear you say that in America. Overwork, the doctors said; a long rest, that's what they ordered. So I came here, and I bought this cottage, and I began to pretend it was real. I pretended I was an artist; I pretended that Marcelle was—and she did come into this room—twice she came, I'll swear it. Oh, I've had moments; they can't quite beat Darius Hocking out of what he wants.

"But there was my ambition—to exhibit in the Salon, to have a little crowd admiring my picture on varnishing day. I felt that if I could manage that, I'd know it wasn't all pretense and dreams. I'd live my life, my real life, in those minutes. Well, I laid my plans, and I bought my way into the Salon. Three days ago, I saw your picture, and I said to myself, 'That's the picture I'd have painted.' They told me it was by an American, that he wouldn't be here on varnishing day.

"'The Little Palace in the Stars!'" Darius Hocking said it softly. "I suppose every man has a 'Little Palace in the Stars' hidden away somewhere. Well, I lived in mine for those minutes, or years, while I stood on that ladder, and was a successful artist. That's all." The old man sank wearily into a chair.

That's all. That's all my story. I could go on and on, telling you how Denny and Viola tried to make Darius Hocking throw off the years. How, for that night, they admitted him to their kingdom, and included him in the royal celebration—*vin vermouth* in front of the Restaurant du Gougou, and then dinner—not at Gougou's, but the other place. There was champagne—a very magnificent brand, two bottles of Pommery left behind years ago; there was even ice, and Denny emptied all the salt-cellar on to it and frappé the wine. Out of those wonderful windows they looked over the precipice down on the lights of Paris, and a red moon rose behind the Gare d'Orleans. When they came out, the moon was of a mysterious silver, and so was the great dome of the Sacre Cœur, floating over Paris.

"This has been a wonderful night," said the millionaire. "I must dine again at that restaurant. What is it called?"

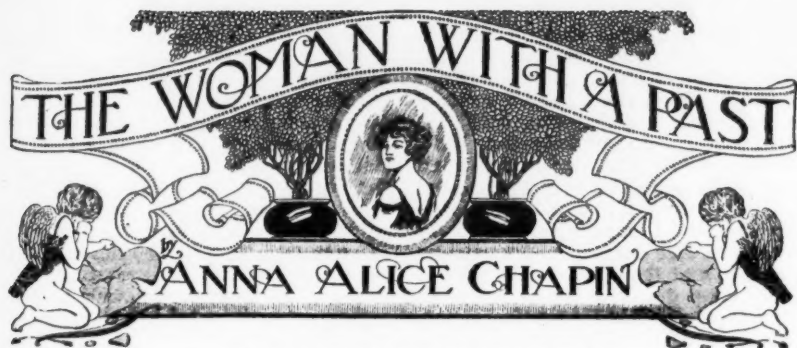
"No, no," cried Viola eagerly, "you must never try to dine there again. You would only be very sad, for perhaps it isn't there at all; perhaps it isn't real; perhaps it has no name, but we call it 'the Restaurant of the Last Star.'"

The millionaire leaned over the balustrade and looked down in silence on the sea of lights that was Paris. A troubled murmur floated up from the streets below, like the roar of a distant torrent.

"You are right," he said at last. "I should never be able to find it again. I have had my moment in the stars, now I'll go back to the earth, to my railroads, and banks, and factories, to the making and breaking of men. I can hear them calling to me down there. The wheels of the treadmills of power—the—"

His cigar escaped from his fingers, and he watched its glowing ashes drop from the heights like star splinters falling from heaven to earth.





#### IV.—RENAISSANCE

The year's at the spring  
And day's at the morn;

God's in his Heaven,  
All's right with the world.—*Pippa Passes.*

**T**HE country? I should think I would! Yes, One Hundred and Fifty-fifth Street Elevated at nine. It's a lovely idea, Gregory."

Pippa hung up the receiver in a sort of sober glow. How wonderful it was to have Gregory Markham for a friend! A friend! She said that word over to herself sometimes as if it were a spell, or a holy phrase to exorcise demons. So some women whisper "*love*," or "*motherhood*." Motherhood was still a sacred word to Philippa Carpenter, but she did not say it over to herself. In her heart was a silence whenever she came to that word; she had put it out of her vocabulary of life. And love? Once it had been the will-o'-the-wisp that led her over the marshes and into the wilderness. Now—well, there was very little glamour about the word now to Pippa Carpenter. The will-o'-the-wisp's lantern was out, and—she was still in the wilderness.

But—a friend! Friendship was for Pippa the supreme luxury, the divine indulgence. She had never in all her life had a man friend before. Gregory was not the least bit in love with her—

how grateful she was that he was not! He could meet her eyes squarely, laugh at her affectionately, contradict her crossly on occasions; he could even tell her when there was too much powder on her nose, and her side combs needed pushing in! Also, he had never once said that she was beautiful, or exquisite, or wonderful, or provocative, or any of the other things which she undoubtedly was, and which other men had for years been exhausting tautology to explain to her. She adored being ordered about by him, and scolded, and made fun of, and taken care of—just as if she had been his kid sister.

Yes, they were friends. All that spring they had been "playing" together, taking heavenly trips into the country or off to the sea, for lunch, or dinner, or long, rambling afternoons. They had stopped for tea at queer old inns, and they had picked the first arbutus in the woods, digging it out from under the dead leaves of last year. And they had sat perfectly silent beside the sea for twenty minutes on end, and then come out of their brown study with the same half laugh, and friendly meeting of eyes— It had been the best

springtide in Pippa Carpenter's life—except, possibly, one April very long ago, when her name, Philippa, had been thus abbreviated because, like the poet's morning-hearted Pippa, her creed was, "All's right with the world!"

That, however, was a long time ago—a very long time ago, she told herself, as she wistfully studied her reflection in the mirror that morning. She wondered whether other people could read the histories and heartaches that were written in delicate shadows on her lovely ivory-white face. The heavy hair, deep red with winy lights in it, was as beautiful as ever; the purple-gray eyes were clear and sweet—it was only the look of them that was old. And yet—Pippa had a breathless sense, rare with her, of the perilous race of time—the brevity of all things, even of herself.

The thought startled her. There had been months and years when she had chafed against the gradual and leisurely coming of the end. It had seemed to her like that incomparable torture of the dropping water. The first ten—even the first hundred or thousand drops, fell on your head lightly enough; then they began to beat like hammers on your very brain. After a while, a very long while, you died of it. That was like life, as Mrs. Carpenter had viewed it for a large majority of her days. For the first time in fifteen years, she felt, this windy spring morning, as if she must hurry. The star was just setting—were her feet swift enough to follow it yet a little farther below the horizon?

She turned resolutely from the looking-glass, and pulled on her gloves. It was half past eight. The air was cool, but sweet. Already the breath of summer was in it. She had chosen the simplest gown and hat she owned—exquisite both, and subtly becoming, but as guileless as a young girl's clothes. She looked, in spite of her progression to the late thirties, as young as spring itself.

When she met Gregory on the elevated platform, he smiled at her approvingly.

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"You look bully!" he told her, with cordial candor. "Your hat's crooked—over your left ear. That's better. Lord, think of wearing gloves a morning like this!"

She laughed joyously, and peeled off the offending *suede*.

"Put them in your pocket!" she commanded, and he crammed them in with matches, time-tables, small change, loose cigarettes, and the raft of other masculine driftwood that proves all men incurably small-boyish. She looked at him with a warm tenderness. His rugged face was not a bit handsome, but it was a good face. She knew it pretty well now, and could read all sorts of kindly lines about the firm mouth and the honest hazel eyes. He was a dear fellow—she hoped, with an almost motherly pang, that he was going to find life good to him.

But to-day he seemed different from his usual breezy self. All the way out into the country, he seemed unusually preoccupied and ill at ease, and all her arts and wiles could not seem to lighten the constraint.

"You're not up to your regular form, Gregory," she reproached him, as they left the little suburban station and walked slowly along the shining country road that might lead to the village street or to a forest. He laughed shortly, but did not answer.

Two early butterflies, as pale as little tea-rose petals, fluttered above the hedge. There was a patch of bluets, as azure as the sky itself.

"We used to call them *innocents*," murmured Pippa, speaking her idle thoughts aloud. Gregory did not seem to hear.

"Look!" she exclaimed, with soft eagerness. "Those blessed birds—circling round each other—Gregory—Do you think they are—making love?"

"It's the mating season," said Gregory simply.

The two robins flew away across a fragrant, teeming field, to the woodlands, searching a place to build their nest.

Pippa quoted under her breath:

"Each to each imparting sweet intents  
For this new year, as brooding bird to bird."

She broke off to gather some dandelions, a handful of little stars; the scent of them was pungent and fresh like spring itself.

"I want dandelion salad for lunch!" she announced shamelessly. Suddenly she saw that Gregory was altogether out of her irresponsible, whimsical mood.

"Doesn't it feel springlike, poor thing?" she queried solicitously.

"I feel springlike all right," said Gregory, with some asperity; "only I can't chatter about it as much as you do!"

Philippa regarded him open-eyed. He had never accused her of chattering before.

"What's the matter with you, Gregory?" she demanded quietly. "You aren't a bit like yourself."

"No, I'm not," he returned, scowling at the pale green of a young birch tree. "I—to tell you the truth," he burst out, "I've got you out here on false pretenses!"

"What sort of pretenses?" she wanted to know, quite undismayed. "Are you going to take me to a summer resort, where there are automobiles and dreadful young persons playing tennis, and bridge parties, and—"

"No," he interrupted, "but I *am* going to take you to a hotel."

"Well," said Philippa tolerantly, "I suppose we must eat in the course of time. Personally, I should prefer a farmhouse or a strawberry patch, but the first might be inhospitable, and the second unripe. What is the matter with you, Gregory? You look frightfully uncomfortable."

"I am," he said, with rather a rueful grin. "You see—I've never been engaged before."

Pippa stopped stock-still.

"Engaged?" she repeated, in an amazed tone.

He nodded, stopping too. "I'm taking you to see the girl I'm going to marry," he said, without looking at her.

There was a moment's pause, then Pippa said, in an odd, rather breath-

less voice: "We look like two idiots standing here in the middle of the road!" They began to walk on, in the sweet spring sunshine. "Who is she?" asked Mrs. Carpenter presently.

"Just—a girl." Gregory seemed to be more natural now that the plunge had been taken. "A dear, human girl— You—oh, hang it, let's be honest! You may think she doesn't quite 'belong' when you meet her first. She's knocked about, and had a very hard time—been on the stage and all that—she's English—not first-class English. Her father was a grocer—she's quite honest about it, bless her! But she's young, and sweet, and as honest as the sun. A—a good little girl, Pippa, and pretty."

"Of course!" Pippa permitted herself to say.

"Don't be catty!" he chided good-humoredly. "Nice women always hate to see their men friends marry, but it's a beastly dog-in-the-manger trick! You'd never look at us yourselves, but you don't want any one else to steal us!"

He could always say rude things without being rude; in any case, Pippa was not in a mood to be resentful of trifles. She was meditating with a sense of appallment on Gregory's account of his fiancée: "A grocer's daughter"—"been on the stage"—"knocked about"—the specifications were not reassuring. Oh, Gregory should have married some one exquisite, and fresh, and lovely, like a flower—a garden flower, the fine result of care and cultivation!

Philippa had a deep-seated respect for her own class. She had turned her back upon it years ago, and had herself betrayed it in a dozen ways, but *noblesse oblige* was still the most living item in her rather casual code of morals and manners. Evidently, Gregory had not chosen a lady—that was what it came to. She thought the ache in her heart was from her disappointment about that, and her apprehension for her friend's future. But it was a deeper pang than she knew, and it was rooted in that tearing loneliness which

assails the human soul most savagely in the spring.

In a little time, they came to the hotel—hardly more than a country boarding house; and a moment later a rustle at the door of the damp and musty little sitting room drove the blood to Philippa's heart.

She rose eagerly, almost nervously for her, to see the girl Gregory Markham was going to marry. At first, all she noted was a stiff and schoolgirlish white muslin dress with a pink sash. The head was covered with pretty brown hair, curling tightly; the face—Pippa nearly sank into a chair—for a moment she could neither see nor hear.

As if from a great distance, Gregory's voice came to her:

"I'm going out to smoke. I want you two to make friends, and you'll do it better without me."

He vanished into the green spring world out of doors, and Pippa, with a tremendous effort, dispelled the cobwebs from her astonished brain and faced the girl in the white muslin.

"Gladys Harrison!" she said, slowly dragging the name up from the recesses of her memory.

The girl nodded. She was decidedly pretty, with a fresh skin and china-blue eyes. Her complexion was, in fact, too good to need rouge, but Pippa saw a faint bloom that was not of nature upon her smooth cheeks. A man would not have noticed it at all. The girl had a full, red mouth; she was slender and shapely, and her curly brown hair was abundant. A Frenchwoman of her sort would have been chic and insinuating; poor Gladys Harrison did not have the bravado of her class. She came of an inferior stratum—a caste bred to service, to petty trade, and to pettier roguery. And she never seemed to have wholly forgotten the fact.

With the curiously inverted idea of bettering her condition, she had run away with a bookmaker who had "something sure" at Ascot. There had been a rather ugly scandal—a boy who had lost a fortune, a suicide, and the arrest of the bookmaker; and Gladys had had to decide between going home to

Hammersmith and the choleric green-grocer father, and starting out to seek her fortune elsewhere.

The chimeric fortune allured her more than her father's inevitable punishment, and she moved into London. Philippa had run across her there, it matters not how. Gladys Harrison was one of the many derelicts that Mrs. Carpenter, a bit of a tramp steamer herself, had tried to tow into harbor. She had failed, but because, to a girl of this type, emotional appeal is always the strongest. That fact had hitherto been Gladys Harrison's undoing. Might it now be her salvation? Pippa had thought of her more than once, and wondered whether she had drifted out on the tide that draws down Piccadilly Circus at night.

She had lost sight of her for many years, and now she stood there, in a white muslin dress with pink ribbons—Gladys Harrison and none other—in a suburban New York boarding house; and—and—Pippa felt the world whirling about her—it was she who was Gregory Markham's "dear, human girl!" Oh, monstrous, unbelievable! Such things cannot happen—we all know that they can never, never happen until—they do!

Before Philippa could compose herself enough to find her voice, the girl herself began to speak:

"Mrs. Carpenter—aren't you going to give me my chance?"

The pretty, flushed face was quivering under what Gladys Harrison believed to be a nonchalant air. Her eyes looked round like a child's.

"Gladys Harrison!" Pippa said again. "What are you doing here?"

The girl smiled almost shyly. "Don't you know?" she said. "I thought he would have told you."

"He told me——" The words stuck in Mrs. Carpenter's throat.

"That we were going to be married? Yes. I always knew I'd be happy some time," said Gladys Harrison rather piteously. Some stern, shocked look in the other woman's face brought a sudden sober expression to her own.

"Mrs. Carpenter," she said, evidently

seeking for words, "aren't you going to give me my chance? I'm straight enough now." Again that pathetic flush and quiver. "If he finds out, I—I'll kill myself, I guess. If he doesn't— Oh, I'll be a good wife to him—and all the better because—because of—that!" said Gladys, and Philippa knew that she was referring to the past.

"But it isn't right—it isn't fair!" exclaimed Pippa. "He doesn't know—he doesn't dream—it's—can't you see it's *cheating* him?"

Suddenly Gladys stared at Pippa with a curious look.

"Is that it?" she said. "Do you love him yourself?"

"No!" cried Pippa proudly. "He is my *friend*! You can't understand that."

"Oh, yes," said the girl quietly. "I can understand that. Once a man helped me over a bad place with my rent, and never let me—pay him back. You understand? I think *he* was a friend. Mrs. Carpenter, aren't you going to give me my chance?"

Gladys Harrison was one of those soft and pliable creatures seemingly created only to be loved and to love. She was, to use a country idiom of her own country, "marked for love." A great passion might develop her into a fine woman or blast her utterly. She could be shaped and touched by no other medium. Very simple and very young, in spite of her sins, she seemed to be the type of girl whose freshness is renewed with every fresh emotion. In the childlike blue eyes burned now a divine flame of devoted tenderness. There was a sudden frank and desperate appeal in them as she waited, watching the other woman's face.

Pippa turned away from her and looked out of the window. The gay, green world was busy beginning the year once more. Birds were calling their mates, trees were budding, new grass blades were pushing pluckily up among the old brown roots. The whole earth seemed to be starting over again. The idea came to Pippa with a sort of shock. *Starting over again!* Why, everything in nature was given a chance

to begin again! Why had she never thought of that before? It was only man who found things irrevocable; God never did. Every single year He let the growing world begin again, and see what it could do this time!

There was a hot mist in Philippa's eyes as she turned back to Gladys Harrison.

"Do you love him?" she demanded abruptly. "Really love him?"

The girl's face flushed slowly. Her life had not made it easy for her to voice a noble or a sincere sentiment, but she tried.

"He—why—he's just about everything!" she said haltingly. "I—" She raised her eyes to Mrs. Carpenter's. "He's just about everything!" she repeated.

Gladys was the type of eternal humanity—erring and aspiring, falling and struggling up from the mire, continually working out a strange sequence of retrogression and progress. Whether such souls go on or fall back, who shall say? It had seemed to Pippa that Gladys was hopeless—but something had kindled the fires anew in her sluggish spirit. She was, for the moment, at any rate, moving forward with the morning light in her face. Would it last? Could Philippa Carpenter assume the awful responsibility of believing that it would last?

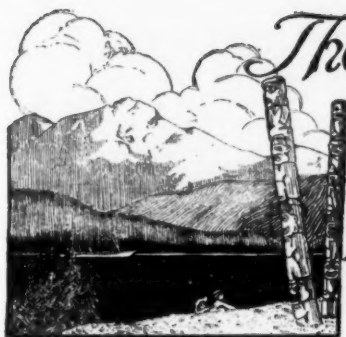
"Aren't you going to give me my chance?" reiterated Gladys Harrison, repeating herself lamely, but with a sob in her throat.

"I—think I am," said Pippa, in a low voice. It was her capitulation, and the strength seemed to go out of her with the words. She drooped a little where she stood. Her friend! Her friend! Oh, it had been too good and sweet to last! She must go out onto the Great Highway again, and leave the spring world to its nesting—

"Good-by," she said to Gladys Harrison, and managed to smile. "Begin again—and good luck to you!"

She went out into the growing, green world.





# The PILOT of KETCHIKAN

By  
ADA WOODRUFF  
ANDERSON

**A**T the time the *Halcyon* rounded the promontory and dropped anchor off Ketchikan, excitement over the beach gold discoveries north of the settlement had reached the flood. That was the reason why, when the hour of sailing arrived the following day, Burton Ashe found his yacht deserted by her pilot and half the crew. He himself had secretly planned this summer cruise up the Alaskan coast with a view to combining a little prospecting with pleasure, but it was not gold mining that interested him; he needed, for his contemplated smelters down on Puget Sound, a copper-iron property.

He stood on the deck, aft, that morning, his feet well apart, bracing his ample figure to the swell, while he turned the binoculars slowly, searching the embryonic seaport. The yacht's tender, in which he had dispatched his two remaining sailors to pick up a new pilot, was still beached alongside the only shipping on the deserted water front, a high-prowed sea canoe. "Damn that Watson!" he exclaimed at last, and, dropping the hand that held the glass, swung around. "I beg your pardon, Judith," he added quickly. "I forgot you were here. And, well, you see, we should be running out on this tide; it's a shame to miss this wind, but we can't go skiddering among these uncharted rocks and islands without a pilot."

The girl was looking off obliviously to the sheer front of the mountain that

overtopped the town, but mirth lurked at the corners of her mouth, and in her eyes. After a moment she said: "I wish we knew where to find Merry Bradley."

"Mary Bradley? Do you happen to know a Mary Bradley here at Ketchikan?"

Judith's mirth bubbled over. "It's Merry, Mr. Ashe, for Meriwether. Don't you remember Meriwether Bradley, who pulled the stroke oar in the University of Washington against Stanford two years ago? He won the cup for us. He graduated from the mining-engineering course that June, and went north to the Yukon. Winter caught him there, but he made his way out this spring, and when I heard from him just before the *Halcyon* sailed from Seattle, he had stopped here at Ketchikan. He meant to spend the season prospecting these islands."

"I see." Ashe paused, watching the girl's face, all warmth, color, charm, framed in the red-bronze of her wind-tumbled hair; then he added, moving to take the seat beside her near the helm: "So you think that qualifies him to pilot the *Halcyon*?"

Judith nodded. "He doesn't need skipper's papers, since you have your own, and he could just take us where he has already been. He had bought an old yawl, the only boat to be had at the time he wrote, and was rigging her for a cruise. He must have had considerable experience by now."

Ashe smiled his dry, whimsical smile.

"I shouldn't wonder. I haven't a doubt."

"And Merry Bradley understands a sail," the girl went on eagerly. "He managed the mainsheet in the international races three years ago. Surely you remember. You were there at that first race in English Bay. You saw us win the first leg and the second, with the last buoy just ahead, and the Canadian yacht creeping up half a mile astern."

"I remember," said Ashe; "now I remember. The time the tide rip caught the American boat and swept her back out of her course. My, my, how those young fellows worked!"

"And Merry Bradley most of all. He knows water like a duck; but what could be done in a racing tide rip, with the wind dying down and the rules against touching an oar?"

Ashe shook his head. But even a successful lover does not care to hear another man eulogized by the woman whom he expects to marry; and when he spoke again, he said only: "So that was Merry Bradley, and he is here somewhere around Ketchikan. We will keep a watch for him when we are under way. A man in a yawl looking for beach gold."

"It isn't beach gold he is interested in." Judith turned her face a little, lifting her glance again to the snowy height above the town. "It's a wonderful copper-iron mountain, with the ore showing right at tidewater."

Ashe started, then instantly his face became a mask. "You mean plain copper, Judith; not copper-iron. That is the rarest combination in the Northwest mineral belt."

"And that is just what Merry wrote. He said that if he found it, it meant riches to him; he began to see a chance of his best dreams coming true."

There was a brief silence, then Ashe said slowly, steadying his voice: "Is it an old discovery? A mountain he has heard about?"

Judith's glance returned and, meeting Ashe's, her face shone with a sort of inner glow. "I can't hope to make you believe it; it will sound like the

sheerest romance to you, but Merry is so—sure—so earnest—he can make a story so real, so interesting, I feel it's true. I wake up in the nighttime seeing that lost mine, and imagine over and over the last chapter. It always ends the same way."

She laughed softly at her own credulity, and looked off seaward with the flush deepening in her face. Ashe watched her, knitting his brows. "So it is a lost mine," he said, after a moment. "The proposition has been worked."

"Ages ago, yes. To begin with," she went on seriously, "an English gentleman whom he met on his way North called his attention to the necessity of a copper-iron discovery on the Pacific coast. He said his company in British Columbia were waiting, ready to build smelters as soon as such a property could be secured. And he said that if Merry could get them in touch with such a prospect, they would make it worth his while. But he was on his way to expert mines in the Tanana Valley then, and, as you know, winter caught him before the work was finished."

"Then, one day, while he was waiting and chafing for a chance to come out over the winter trail, an old prospector found him. He had been unfortunate, 'down on his luck,' Merry called it, and needed a grubstake. Most of all he wanted a big Siberian dog, part wolf, that Merry owned, to lead his team. He offered a half interest in all he should find, but Merry depended on his dog to connect with the winter stage from Fairbanks, and he said he didn't care much about placers; what he meant to look for was a copper-iron combination in some accessible place along the coast. Then the old miner remembered a mountain that he had seen years before, at the time he followed the first gold rush up the Stikine from Wrangell. He had made the trip up the inland passage in a small sloop, feeling his way among the islands, and late one afternoon had found himself skirting a small cove."

"He had put in there for the night, and had come to anchor under a great

peak that broke in a bluff to the sea. The whole mountain seemed to be capped with solid copper and iron, and in the face of the cliff at tidewater, considerable work had been done to excavate the ore. Later, he learned that a Russian ship, half a century earlier, had carried away several cargoes. For this reason, because it had the appearance of a worked mine, and was so far off the general line of travel, he was sure that the mountain never had been prospected. He remembered that an old Indian village stood on the opposite approach, but he couldn't give the latitude, and the peak and the island itself had evidently been left off the chart of the coast. It was a long distance below Wrangell, but he promised Merry that if he would let him have the dog, and would wait for him to make his prospecting trip, he would go south with him in the spring, and guide him to the place."

Judith paused, looking off to the snowy height above Ketchikan an absent moment. "But the old man never came back," she added. "He died in a blizzard on the trail."

Ashe's brows relaxed. "I see," he said dryly; "I see. All Bradley has to go on is the yarn of a babbling old prospector."

A sudden fire flashed and died in the girl's eyes. "The miner had had years of practical experience; he knew ores. And he was well known on the Yukon; his word could be relied on. Merry found out that. Then the prospector had told him the name of the Russian ship, and there was Harry Wilbur, his old fraternity roommate, going into Siberia with the railroad engineers by way of Russia. Merry cabled him to find out where the vessel registered, and get the latitude of the island from the ship's log."

"Has he heard?" asked Ashe dryly.

Judith shook her head. "He hadn't at the time he wrote, but he expected an answer to reach him here at Ketchikan."

Ashe laughed his short, crisp laugh, and rose to turn the binoculars again upon the town. The color flamed for

an instant in the girl's face, then she said: "Of course, you are skeptical, but you don't know Harry Wilbur. He loves a conundrum; nothing stimulates him like a knotty problem. And the American engineers are in a position to get anything they ask."

There was a brief silence. Ashe's glass was focused on the water front. "Some one is launching that canoe," he said. "It doesn't look like an Indian. Now he's off. Now he's running up a sail. Great Scott, see that canvas! An overgrown mainsail; a jib; and now it's a spinnaker. A spinnaker hitched to a cockleshell canoe!"

"But it steadies her. See how straight she steps along!" The girl was on her feet, watching, wide-eyed, the maneuvers of the craft. "And it is one of those seagoing Haida canoes. But an Indian wouldn't carry that canvas, true. With half a gale blowing in Dixon Entrance, there isn't a white man would dare—unless"—her voice shook a little—"it's Merry Bradley. Please, please, may I look just a moment?"

Ashe turned and put the binoculars in her hand. Then he thrust his own hands in his pockets and stood waiting. She was not very tall, and he measured six feet one in his shoes, but he dropped his chin on his chest and watched her with an upward look from under contracted brows.

"Oh," she cried, and her voice fluctuated softly, the color played in her face, "I believe it is Merry! I've seen him trim ship just that way; balanced nicely over the side, clinging with his heels, watching the top of the dipping mast. And see, see! He is going to bring her around. Now the mainsail hides him. Now, now, he's speeling down on the new course. It looks as if he means to speak the *Halcyon*."

As she held the binoculars to her eyes, the jewel in the ring she wore flamed and glowed in the sun. It caught Ashe's glance, and a ray of satisfaction supplanted the annoyance in his face. He was glad that he had chosen the blue diamond instead of the larger yellow stone he had hesitated over at Hanson's. The color of this

was certainly fine, and, away from the other, it seemed to have gathered size. The gold band it was meant to guard by and by would have to be narrow. Judith had remarkably pretty hands, and he noticed, for the first time, a delightful dimple just at the wrist; then, as she returned the glasses, he imprisoned that left hand and raised it to his lips.

She gave him a swift, startled look, almost of dread; the color surged in her cheeks and went, while the hand fluttered in his like a trapped bird. But Ashe enjoyed surprising her with these little approaches to sentiment. He was reassured now that these emotions were wholly new to her; he was the first to touch her maiden heart. And her dismay had never seemed quite so apparent and alluring before. It was pervaded with an element of aloofness that enticed him to surprise her again. But, suddenly, a foot stumbled in the companionway. They both turned, and Ashe released her hand. Professor Holt was helping his wife up the stairs.

All the routine aboard was subject to Mrs. Holt's welfare. She was a slight, frail woman, with an intrepid spirit that continually exacted tribute of a weak heart. She stopped now, breathing a little hard and quick, with one hand braced on the wall, while she looked, smiling, from her daughter to Ashe. "What is the excitement about?" she asked. Then, as her glance moved beyond them, she saw an answer to her question; and, at the sight of the canoe, stepping swiftly across the harbor, sails swelling in alternate sun and shade, her eyes grew big and eager; a flush, the aftermath of youth, touched her cheek. "How beautiful!" she exclaimed. "How singular! A native boat under that canvas. Is she bringing some one aboard? Some one we happen to know?"

"We thought, possibly"—Judith bent to rearrange some pillows in the most sheltered seat—"before the canoe changed her course and the skipper was hidden by that mainsail, it might be—Merry Bradley."

"Whom," supplemented Ashe, assist-

ing Mrs. Holt over to the cushions, "Judith recommends for Watson's place."

"Meriwether is an authority on boats," said the professor, taking the seat beside his wife, and beaming mildly on the approaching canoe. "He always scored high in athletics. In languages, however, and literature, it was different." Here the scholar paused to shake his head gravely. "Still, still, if the boy failed in his German one semester, he managed to redeem himself the next, and he showed unusual accuracy when it came to mathematics and laboratory work."

Ashe turned and, lifting the binoculars to his eyes once more, looked shoreward. "And Meriwether had a most invigorating personality," resumed the professor. "It had the effect of a fresh breeze when he came into class. We have missed him; we all have been anxious about him; one never knew just where his enthusiasm might lead him up there in the Yukon wilderness; and we shall be glad to see him back. But I was under the impression"—he glanced inquiringly at his daughter—"you told me, I think, it was a ship's boat that he had equipped to navigate these channels. His plans must have failed to mature. But Meriwether was always resourceful," he added, and, rubbing his hands gently, beamed again on the canoe; "most resourceful."

"The tender is coming back," exclaimed Ashe, "and just as she went, with two men." He paused to swing the glasses a little, then concluded: "Whether it's young Bradley or not, our only chance, now, rests with this fellow in the canoe."

As he spoke, the spinnaker came down, and the craft veered to cross the *Halcyon's* stern. "A rudder!" cried Judith; then, suddenly, she saw the broad shoulders and uncovered head of the navigator etched sharply on the mainsail, and raised herself a-tiptoe, fluttering her handkerchief, and called, "Ship ahoy! Aho-y!"

Instantly she was answered. Then the canoe veered again, the mainsail dropped, and the little craft raced

gently in alongside the yacht. The skipper was coatless, and his linen sleeves, rolled back to the elbows, exposed well-shaped, though muscular forearms; his neckband, collarless and turned in, left bare a splendid column of throat. He stood alert, with his hands in an easy grip of the tiller, while his glance measured the lessening space between him and the *Halcyon*; then he lifted his eyes, and, meeting Judith's, his bronzed young face suddenly reflected the radiance in hers.

Ashe stood waiting to catch the high prow. It carried a huge carved raven, above which the jib folded loosely, cowling the open beak. "Well," he said, with his crisp laugh, "this certainly is unique." And he added, as he grasped the figurehead and eased the craft off, "Good morning, sir. Come aboard!"

But the invitation was late. The young navigator, still hatless and without a coat, was already over the side of the *Halcyon*. He took both of Judith's hands in his own, shaking them with a sort of repressed vigor, and, smiling into her misty eyes, repeated, "Well, this is good! This is good!"

The professor rose from his place and stood mildly beaming. But the girl's mother, who had started to her feet, sank back again to her cushions. She leaned forward a little, and her look, swift, searching, moved to Ashe, then returned to the younger man. Her eyes clouded and small lines seemed suddenly engraved at the corners of her mouth.

But Ashe was busy making the painter fast, and, when he lifted his head and turned, the new arrival had discovered that there were other people aboard. "Why, Mrs. Holt!" he was saying, clasping her hand between both his own; "this is better than Christmas." And, "I say, professor, talk about luck!" He wrung the scholar's slender fingers. "I know an island that will stir your soul. It's simply overgrown with totem poles."

"That sounds interesting, Meriwether; most interesting, I assure you. But I am glad to see you again, and looking so remarkably fit."

The boy laughed, a short, pleasant note, and, glancing himself over, began to smooth his hair, which was brown and long enough to break from his fingers in unruly half rings. "I guess I'm spoiling this deck with these prospector's boots. I had some canvas shoes, but they were lost with the yawl."

"Do you mean she was wrecked?" asked Judith breathlessly.

The young navigator nodded. "She was caught in a tide rip off that village I just told the professor about, and was carried on a hidden reef. I saved most of the canvas and the rudder, and gave the rest of the wreckage that came ashore to the Indians for this ark. She was condemned and rotting on the beach, leaked like a sieve; but they were starting on a fishing trip, and wouldn't part with anything that could float. I managed to patch her, though, well enough to get back to Ketchikan, and I've taken time to calk and rig her straight. She's as fit now as the yawl was."

He started to swing around, with a gesture that invited inspection of the renovated craft, and found the master of the *Halcyon* at his elbow. "Oh, I'm Bradley, Mr. Ashe," he said frankly. "I met you a few years ago in English Bay, and I've seen you a lot in that red car of yours speeding around Seattle, but you never seemed to remember me."

He paused a moment to grasp Ashe's offered hand, then: "I saw those two men you sent ashore for a pilot," he explained. "You couldn't have known that every other man has left Ketchikan for the new beach discoveries. Even the storekeeper has joined the stampede; his wife is running the business. There's only the postmaster's daughter to sort the mails, and another girl is managing the telegraph office. That's why I stopped to offer my services. I am going back to that island where I lost my boat, and I can take this yacht that far, if you will give me a tow. Then I could leave you there a day, perhaps, to study the relics with the professor while I explore ahead in

the canoe. In this way, making short stages and sounding in advance, we might work safely to Wrangell, where you can probably find a regular pilot."

"Your plan suits me," said Ashe abruptly. "I'll give you just what I paid Watson; three dollars a day."

Bradley flushed. "I'd rather not bind myself to wages," he answered. "I shall take you out of the main-traveled course and explore considerably on my own account. It's about twenty-five miles to that village, and I can cover the stretch quicker, and it will be a lot pleasanter, going in the yacht."

When a Pacific Indian journeys, his house belongings go with him to furnish the encampment and, incidentally, ballast the sea canoe; and, when the *Halcyon* dropped anchor off the village, all the tribe was away for the salmon run, not even a mongrel dog remained. But the professor drew his spare frame erect; a mild enthusiasm stirred his face. His far-seeing eyes followed the line of totems that patrolled the silent street, and, to him, each grotesque monster, in the red northern afterglow, became a beckoning lure.

Judith, too, rose from her place near the helm in a glow of delight. "Oh," she cried, and drew a deep breath, "it all looks so mysterious, so ages old!" And she added, appealing from Ashe to the young engineer, "Must we wait until to-morrow to be put ashore?"

Bradley laid willing hands on the painter to draw the tender close, but Ashe looked at his watch. "I have to remind you it's half past ten," he said. "Think of it! Almost midnight, and light as day. But that's the trouble up here. We don't know when to sleep. Take her ashore, Bradley"—he closed his watch with a snap—"take her ashore; and give the professor that third place. He won't be able to go to bed unless he has had a preliminary look at those idols, or monuments, or whatever they are."

"Genealogical trees, I should call most of them, Mr. Ashe. The records of a vanishing race."

The scholar started to take the of-

fered seat in the tender, then paused to look back at his wife. But she smiled, with a little gesture forward in the direction of the village. "Oh, I'll take care of Mrs. Holt," said Ashe.

Judith's mother leaned interestedly to watch them embark, then her eager eyes moved to the totem-lined shore, and on up the peak that loomed over the village and fell abruptly to a great headland, etched sharply on a brilliant sea. "I never imagined such color. It's something to remember a lifetime; and the recollection on dark nights will light one through." Her voice shook a little, but her glance came back to the tender, and she smiled. "Judith will want to climb that headland for the outlook. It must be wonderful up there. Wonderful!"

Ashe laughed. "I see you are blaming me for not going ashore, now, an hour short of midnight, to blaze a trail for her up that wooded bluff. But she's safe with Bradley, and he can do it quicker and better than I can. He's used to it, and he enjoys it; it's all in his work." He settled himself comfortably in the seat beside her; then, his glance lifting from the village to the reddening mountaintop, he added: "But it is gorgeous, isn't it?"

Mrs. Holt was silent. Her eyes rested on the girl in the bow of the boat; then, after a moment, moved to the young engineer. A shadow crossed her face, and it was as if those faint lines were retouched at the corners of her mouth.

Bradley dipped a long stroke, with an easy swing of his broad shoulders, that brought the tender quickly to the beach. The one street took the contour of the shore between the high-tide line and the side of the promontory. None of the crude shelters had a second story, but a totem pole, elaborately carved and colored, towered like a monument before nearly every door. Here a huge raven with lifted wings poised on an airy apex; there a hideous, grinning bear hugged a pinnacle while his ascending footprints, cut and stained in the wood, marked his course up the pole.



"Oh," said Judith, "it all seems so strange and creepy! Almost"—she moved a-tiptoe, and, laying her hand on Bradley's sleeve, peered around a broody corner—"almost as if dead Indians were dogging our steps."

Bradley's laugh rang a light echo from the bluff. "They were alive enough three days ago when my yawl went to pieces on that reef. That's it, off there. You see? The streak of black just beyond the white ruffle."

The professor, a little in advance, had come to the last pole at the end of the street. He stood rubbing his palms while his glance moved slowly up over the succession of carvings to the green shape set horizontally on the top. A soft fire burned in his eyes. "That must represent a whale. You see the teeth and that forked tail."

"It is. It is," cried Judith softly, "though it's painted that impossible green. And it is laughing. Did you ever see anything as hideous, and splendid, and unique?"

"The color was obtained by long emersion in a decoction of alder leaves," explained the scholar. "But this carving no doubt is the heraldic record of a mighty hunter and chief. This is his face directly under the whale, which was his own coat of arms. The next head, a woman's clearly, represents the princess he married; and the bird above her—an eagle's I should judge—was her crest. This giant frog, possibly, was the totem of some famous warrior whom he overcame. It is very evident that the tree was erected to the memory of a great personage. It is the most elaborate in the village, and this house to which it belongs seems specially marked." He moved to examine the embellishments cut and stained in the front wall of the shelter, which was set directly against a rocky seam where the side of the headland began to break to the sheer face. "Here is the green whale again, and placed where there should be a door. Stay, stay, there is a door, but it is sealed!"

Judith drew close and peered through a narrow slit that was the only window in the wall. "There is no floor," she

said, after a moment, "and a curious-looking jug, that seems to be woven of fibers, is standing on the ground by a sort of spearhead. And there are bones."

She shivered and drew back, but Bradley, glancing in, startled the bluff again with his short, pleasant laugh. "It looks more like my boat hook. I tried to smuggle it aboard my canoe, but it disappeared."

He moved on around the house, looking for a way up the promontory, but the professor, having satisfied himself with a long look through the aperture, drew a thick notebook from his pocket and began to search for a reference. "This is most interesting!" he exclaimed. "Without a doubt we have discovered one of those rare and ancient houses of the dead."

The young engineer was out of sight, but the stir of branches above showed Judith where he was climbing. Then, presently, he reappeared. He stood for a moment, shoulders and head framed in spruce twigs, looking down, then: "Oh, there you are!" he exclaimed. "I've found an old trail up through the trees, and the outlook up there ought to be fine. Come with me."

Judith turned to the professor, who had seated himself on a stranded log, fronting the whale totem, while he added important data to his notes. "We are going up to see the view, father. Will you come, too? Father," she repeated, "will you wait for us, then, here?"

He nodded absently, without looking up from his work, and Judith hurried along to the foot of the bluff. Bradley met her and took her hand up the first sharp pitch, which followed a tilting spur of rock. Constantly, as they doubled across the side of the promontory, outcroppings of this ledge shelved under their feet. Finally, high up where it broke in several steps, Bradley stopped. He stooped to examine a new fissure, and picked up a fragment that had chipped out. "Copper!" he exclaimed. "I was sure of it. And iron—as I thought." His voice vibrated softly; he turned the rock slowly in his hands. "Well—this is—luck!"

Judith stood watching him. Her breast rose and fell in short, deep breaths; the flush of a wild rose was in her cheek; her eyes caught the light in his. "You mean this is your—mountain," she said.

He nodded slowly. "I got my cablegram from Wilbur this morning at Ketchikan, but I haven't had a chance to tell you all day, without giving it away to Ashe. The latitude hits this island all right, and I'm expecting, in the next ten minutes, to look down into that cove where the Russian ship anchored."

He took her hand again and drew her quickly up the steps to the shoulder that formed the promontory. Then, presently, as the trees thinned, snow mountains opened, vista on vista, touched with alpine fire. Every cañon was a waterway into the Unknown. Far off, where the brilliant sea cooled to opal, a dim headland marked the entrance to the fiord where was situated Ketchikan, the only touch of civilization in many wilderness miles. The wood ended in a few stunted wind-twisted firs; then, suddenly, the trail dipped over a succession of benches to a small cove.

Bradley stood looking down into that little harbor. He saw plainly the rusty outcropping of a great ledge just above the water line, and in it, where the thick neck of the headland joined the mountain, a yawning cavern. "That's it!" he said at last, and his voice deepened, yet shook. "You see, Judith? That's the old quarry where the Russian ship took on her cargoes. Come"—he swung around and grasped her hands, shaking them slowly—"I wanted you to be the first to congratulate me."

"I do! I do!" Her eyes were big and misty; her face was a transparency through which shone the inner glow. "But it's all like a splendid fairy tale. See, there are the Gates of Pearl!" She drew her hands from his and looked off between the shining peaks, far and away to an amethyst stretch of sea. "Any moment your beautiful princess may arrive for you in a golden boat, and you will go sailing through, up and

up, on and on, into the purple solitudes."

Bradley laughed softly. "If I do, it's a real girl, warm flesh, and blood, and soul, I'm going with; and it's my own canoe that's ready and waiting on the other side of this head. I've got to bring her around into the cove on the early tide to stake the claim and tack up my location notice at the abandoned quarry; then it's off and away to make my entry before Ashe is awake." He paused, watching her face with clouding eyes; then, "What made you promise to marry him?" he asked.

She gave him a swift, startled look, and the light went out of her face. "My letter did reach you, after all," she said.

Bradley nodded. "This morning, at Ketchikan. That's why I stopped to board the *Halcyon*, and risked bringing her here to my island. It wasn't because you loved him," he went on. "How could you? A man like that, hard as brass, with a soul double-riveted to his stamp mills and concentrators."

"You are unjust. Burton Ashe is one of the most generous, honorable men I ever knew. He made a splendid endowment to the college library; and headed the subscription lists to the new gymnasium and the armory. The students simply adore him. And his influence with the regents has secured father a science chair. You know the power he is in the Northwest. Men listen to Burton Ashe everywhere. Whatever he touches is a success. He never fails. What he wants"—her voice wavered—"he always gets."

"So that was the reason, as I thought. And, of course, you counted the comfort, the luxury it meant for your mother the rest of her life."

"And this sea trip—you can see what it has done for her already. And Mr. Ashe promised to wait until I won my A. B. So much can—happen—I might even—die—in a year."

She covered the break in her voice with a forced little laugh, and started back across the promontory. The young engineer did not follow directly. His glance rested on her figure trailing

through the trees, and the smile rose again in his eyes. "But you won't die, sweetheart," he said, under his breath, "and you won't marry Burton Ashe!"

He turned and looked down over the abrupt benches to the cove; his hands sought his pockets and his lips fluted their tuneful whistle. "It's uncharted and unsurveyed," he told himself finally, "but I can get my one hundred and sixty acres out of this shoulder; the formation runs straight through, practically all iron and copper. Afterward, I'll climb up there and stake off a location by proxy for Sir Berresford's American partner." He paused to lift his glance to the bald crown of the mountain pushing above a field of snow. "That isn't all alpine glory. Jove, the old man was right. It's a solid cap of copper-iron."

Presently he stepped off the distance across the headland and, finding a broken bough, shaped it deftly with his knife. "Ashe will be wild," he said softly. "He will be ready to come down handsomely, but I can't go back on Sir Berresford." His eyes rested again on Judith, waiting now at the top of the first pitch to the village; then, as he set the stake where his measurement stopped, he shook his head. "It's the hardest proposition I ever struck," he added, "but I never found one yet I couldn't swing. When there's no way around, you've got to cut across."

Judith began the descent, and he quickened his steps to overtake her at the rocky stairs. "See here," he said, "what's your hurry? This ledge crumbles. You must be careful."

He took her hand to help her over the difficult place, and, as they went down, the harbor and the totem-guarded street unfolded before them. "There is the yacht," exclaimed Judith, "but where is the canoe?"

"Why, she's beached down there at the other end of the village. You see her now? Ashe must have changed his mind and had the sailors put him ashore. One of them has taken the tender to put the professor aboard. You see him there amidships? Working, still, I'll wager, on his notes. And

your mother must have gone below. But I don't see Ashe anywhere."

The young engineer's brows clouded. He led the way quickly on, searching the pitches of the bluff as he walked. Presently they stopped, feeling foothold over a slippery spur. The trail narrowed there, and made an acute turn, and, after a moment, Bradley grasped a stout spruce bough and swung himself down; then, bracing against the bole of the tree, reached up to help Judith. This position threw him out of the switchback and brought him on a line with the whale totem.

A few feet below him, the bluff broke sheer to the beach. Suddenly, as he released her hand and started to regain the ledge, his attention was arrested by the rat-a-tat of a hammer under the cliff, and he dropped lower to a jutting rock. A gnarled and twisted fir clung beneath him, and, looking between the boughs, he discovered one of the seamen from the *Halcyon*. He stood on the roof of the whale house, while he reached to tack a placard to the overhanging trunk of the tree. Beyond the building, in a cleft of the rocky wall, Ashe himself was laboriously setting a stake.

Bradley worked cautiously away and joined Judith on the lower dip of the switchback. "What was it?" she asked.

"Ashe's location notice." His voice was quiet, but it took a deeper note. His muscles stiffened; it was as if the steel in him, suddenly upheaving, cropped through.

The girl stopped. Her breath came a little hard and quick, and, looking up in his face, a dread crept into her eyes. "Do you mean he is locating this ground?"

"He is going to try mighty hard. He has staked this side of the head. I don't see how he knew about my mountain. I kept it dark. I didn't suspect this was the island until that cable came from Wilbur. And I haven't told the story to a soul but Sir Berresford and you. But it wasn't you, Judith. You wouldn't have given my story away. Why, you used to wear my frat pin, and those letters of mine were—personal."

Her lip trembled; her hand moved to her throat. "It was such a—splendid—story—" she began, and stopped.

"You did tell him, then? You told Burton Ashe, the one man on the Pacific coast Sir Berresford warned me about. He had it straight from headquarters that Ashe was looking for a smelter site. It's nip and tuck whether his company or Sir Berresford's gets a copper-iron proposition first."

"Oh, I see! I see! And, of course, when you wrote, you didn't dream I knew Mr. Ashe—so well—and that we were all coming North on the *Halcyon*."

"No, that wasn't my dream." He paused, watching the flush sweep over her face. "But I guess it was a fool's dream. And I got what I deserve; talking business to a girl."

He walked on, and, since the path was wider, and, for a short distance, comparatively level, she moved beside him. After a moment she said: "I can't tell you how sorry I am, but I am going to prove it some way—as soon as I can. I didn't believe Burton Ashe could do a mean thing. I never suspected this was more than a pleasure trip. But he must take that notice down, now, to-night, or else—" Her glance fell to the diamond on her hand.

"You mean he must take his jewelry back?" Bradley's brows relaxed. "Then it's all right, Judith. We will let that notice to prospectors hang. The Indians won't leave it posted long, here in their back yard. And it's the entry that counts. It all rests on who finds the recorder first. And I happen to know he isn't at Ketchikan. He followed the stampede, and I met him ten miles this side of town, turning into the inlet where the beach strike was made, the day I started back after I lost my yawl. You understand, Judith. Ashe will sail the *Halcyon* straight for Ketchikan in the morning—he won't need me to pilot—while I am running my canoe direct to the recorder. The moon will rise in an hour, and it's daylight again at two. With this wind with us, I needn't wait for the early tide, and I could crowd on full sail, with you aboard, Judith, to manage the helm."

The canoe finished her short tack out of the mouth of the inlet, and, coming about, stepped lightly up the wider channel. Behind her a red sun, rising over a glaciated height, touched the spume with a hundred elusive lights and changed the waves to running fire. Bradley made the sheet fast and came aft to relieve Judith at the helm. He stood for a moment watching an unfolding arm. "There are your Gates of Pearl," he said, "and there is the *Halcyon*—see her?—just swinging into this sound. Ashe waited for the tide, as I expected, to carry him free of that reef."

There was a brief silence, during which they both watched the advancing yacht. Then Judith said: "Of course, he missed the canoe this morning, the instant he came on deck, but he won't know about me until breakfast."

Bradley laughed. "By that time you will be aboard. Your mother will not have had a minute's worry."

"Unless—she has found my note."

Bradley frowned a little, but the smile lurked in his eyes. His mineral claim was safe; regularly filed with the recorder. "So you wrote, did you, and told all about it?"

Judith shook her head. "Not everything, though I almost told her last night. She was awake when I came down the companionway and called, 'Good night, Judith, safe aboard?' I had my hand on the knob, then I remembered her explorer's soul; I knew she would insist on coming, too, and she never could bear the hardship at night in an open canoe, so I just answered, 'Yes, mother, all safe,' and hurried on to my room. But, afterward, I tucked the note under her door. I explained that we were starting on a little cruise in the canoe, and that she need not worry; the *Halcyon* would probably follow, and pick us up toward Ketchikan. And I said it wasn't a lark, exactly, but that I was trying to right a very great wrong I had done you." The color deepened in Judith's face; she looked off again to the approaching yacht. "And I told her Mr. Ashe had deceived us," she went on; "that he

meant to do a dishonorable thing, and I asked her to take care of his ring until I could return it—to him."

"You did that?" Bradley laughed softly, but his young heart spoke through his eyes. "And you are going back, now, like a soldier, to see it out." And, after a moment, he added: "I'm not worth it, but I promise to do my best, all my life, sweetheart, to—keep you from being sorry."

Presently, as the *Halcyon* drew near, Judith said: "And, of course, Mr. Ashe can do absolutely nothing about the claim."

Bradley nodded his head slowly. "He can offer about fifty thousand for my relinquishment."

"Fifty thousand dollars?" She caught her breath. "And if he should?"

"I shall tell him I've got to consult Sir Berresford."

"And Sir Berresford?"

"Why, Sir Berresford will make it a hundred thousand, or else take me into the company. You see, the professor needn't bother about that new science chair. He can spend all his time hunting antiques. And your mother—well—she's going to navigate a little boat of her own."

On board, the scholar was deliberately folding Judith's note. He had just read it aloud to his wife. "It was indiscreet," he said, "most indiscreet. But, on the whole, I am glad it was Meriwether; he certainly understands how to manage his boat."

"Yes, I am very glad it is Merry." Mrs. Holt settled back among her pillows with a smile. "But it was indiscreet—to leave this valuable ring under the stateroom door. You must take it at once, dear, with the note, to Mr. Ashe."



## THE SCIENTIST

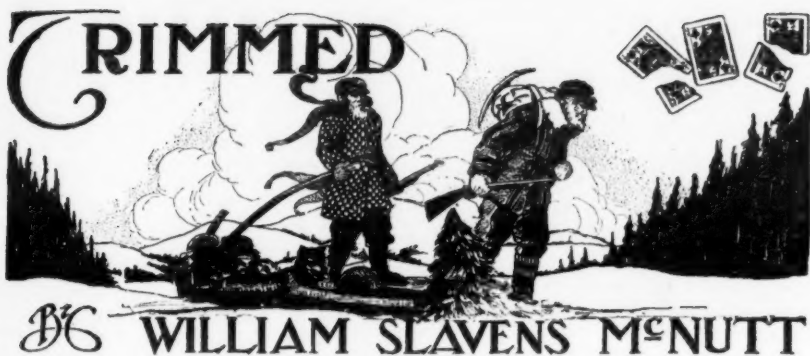
ABOVE the bird and cloud I spread my wings and fly.

I call across the sea and hear an answering cry  
From vasty silences. I speak and, at my breath,  
The mountains, hoary, old as life and grim as death,  
Are torn with pain. They groan in travail, bring to birth  
The gold that waiteth me since morning of the earth.

Engines I make, for toys; great ships upon the deep.  
Some men I make to laugh and some I make to weep.  
Men honor me and count the wondrous things I do.  
But sometimes, all alone, I watch the long night through—  
And then I grow afraid. I call the stars by name—  
The names I gave—but Thou, dost Thou call them the same?

So much I know—but what am I? The thing I seem  
I know; but what beyond the Vision and the dream  
Is this my soul? And whence came I and why? And where  
At last shall I embark? Shall I know Thee out there?

HELEN BAKER PARKER.



**B**IG Tom Darragh first saw Blackie Winn on the Seattle water front late one night in the early spring of ninety-eight; saw him, in the feeble light cast by a single electric bulb over the door of a lonely warehouse, struggling silently with four men.

Tom didn't know any of the four men; he didn't know what the fight might be about; but he was Irish, a foe to the majority on general principles. Then, too, the game silence of the swarthy little fellow's battle against odds appealed to him.

He crossed the street on the jump, and declared himself in on the fuss with a smashing right swing that caught one of the four, who crouched a few feet from the struggling Blackie, waiting for a good opening to land with the blackjack that dangled from his raised right hand. He caught him just under the ear, and sent him skittering off the sidewalk, to lie prone and quiet with his face pressed into the muck of the street.

Two of the men had Blackie garroted from behind, and a third, with his left hand clutched in the neckband of the well-nigh helpless little fellow's shirt, was raining blows on his unprotected face with his free right.

Tom caught the fellow's hand as he drew back his fist to strike, and, turning, levered the surprised thug's arm over his shoulder and bent far forward

with a sudden mighty heave. The man's feet described an arc in the air as he shot over Tom's shoulder. A scream of pain came from him as he thudded limply on the board walk, with a broken arm twisted helpless under him.

Before Tom could straighten up he was caught from behind by one of the men who had held Blackie. His head was twisted in chancery, and a quick succession of dazing uppercuts thudded upon his face. Tom struggled desperately to break the hold, but strain as he might, he could do nothing.

His legs were sagging from the brain daze of the blows on his jaw, and the blackness of unconsciousness was close upon him when he felt the grip that held and choked him loosen. With a supreme effort, he wrenched himself free, tottered, and fell backward.

He lay inert for a moment, fighting for a grip on his senses. Then he rose weakly on one elbow and stared into the battered, anxious face of little Blackie, who leaned over him, panting.

"All right?" Blackie questioned jerkily between hard-won breaths. "Sure you are! That bucko had you on the run there for a minute, though, didn't he? I got loose and landed on him just in time."

Tom sat up and looked around him. The circle of light cast by the electric bulb showed no one but himself and Blackie. The little man grinned.



"Skipped," he explained tersely. "Weather got too warm for 'em. Y'all right now?"

Tom felt of his battered face gingerly. "Sure!" And then quizzically: "Say, what was the fightin' about, anyhow?"

Blackie shrugged.

"I flashed a little money in a saloon up the line, an' they tolled me off down here an' tried to peel it away from me." He studied Tom critically.

"Miner?" he questioned.

Tom nodded. "Some. I just blew in from Colorado."

"Arizona mostly," Blackie submitted for himself. "Goin' north?"

"Yeh."

"So'm I."

The two men studied each other for a long minute in the dim light, and in that minute a partnership that needed no legal word to bind either party in luck or trouble was formed. Darragh nodded in the general direction of up-town.

"Le's go have a drink," he suggested.

"Sure!" Blackie fell into step beside him. "You're some scrapper," he praised.

Darragh grinned fondly down at him. "There ain't much of you," he bantered in return, "but I reckon what there is 'll do to take out in rude company."

Two weeks later they sailed together for Skagway. They owned jointly a piece of ground on Eldorado, in the Klondike, which they sold for a hundred thousand dollars. Together they journeyed out to San Francisco, and burned up half of it in one wild, joyous, three months' spree. Together they went back into the North, and sank the remaining fifty thousand in a hole in the ground on one of the Fairbanks creeks that never panned out. They were together in Nome after that—all over the great Northland. Sometimes they had small strokes of luck, and were in funds; much of the time they were broke; all the time they were firm friends. They spent whole winters inside alone, holed up together in

a little log hut throughout the long arctic darkness, with never a harsh word between them—and than this there is no greater proof of perfect friendship. They were known the length and breadth of Alaska, and everywhere that men of the North gathered the strength of the tie that bound these two was a stock subject of conversation.

Late in the summer of nineteen-eight they fought their way four hundred miles up the Kuskokwim, and secured a lay on two claims on Geary Creek, in the newly discovered Mulkhathna country. It was there that the first break occurred in the friendship that had been so suddenly formed that spring night ten years before on the far-away Seattle water front.

It was caused by a woman. The manner of woman she was, and the things she did demand a description of Malamute City, the main camp in the Mulkhathna district, and of the life of its people.

It was a log-hut and whipsawed-lumber town, for transportation was difficult, and the camp was too new to boast a local sawmill. There was one street, an eighth of a mile long, and lined on both sides with saloons, dance halls, and an occasional trading store. On either side of the street the little cabins etched a ragged fringe of picturesque semicivilization on the half-cleared hillsides. The camp was in the first year of its existence, and was tremendously difficult to get into. This will tell any one acquainted with the country the breed of men gathered there that winter. Not all of them, nor a majority, were bad; but every man in Malamute City that first year was a hard man. Otherwise he wouldn't have been there.

The fact of a man's arrival in camp was a guarantee that he was a hard, fighting man, for to arrive there meant to have dared, and fought hard, and won. If a man didn't win he didn't arrive. The glacial waters of the Northern streams and the melting snows of mountain and valley often re-

veal in grisly terms the tragedy of those who lost.

There were about four hundred men in Malamute City that first winter, and thirty women. Some were the wives of the miners and merchants in the camp; some were the women of the dance halls; and one of the thirty was Nellie Porter.

She was Alganik Porter's sister. Alganik was a shyster lawyer who had come into the country in the first days of Dawson. He hadn't been a shyster when he came, but his morality was not of the fiber that holds firm in the drear, wild immensity of the North. Loneliness, "hooch," and gambling did their work, and he stayed on in the arctic, a jackal prowling after ignorant miners at new strikes. At Malamute he had a saloon and general store. His sister had joined him at Bethel, at the mouth of the Kuskokwim, that summer, and he had brought her up the river with him. She was a sinuous, brilliant blonde, with lips that were too full and red, and eyes that were too bright and cold. She was in the store a great deal of the time, and it was there that Blackie and Tom met her.

They had neither boilers nor drills for the taking of a winter dump, so soon after the freeze-up they left their cabin out on the creek and packed into Malamute City to spend the winter. Within a week after they had been introduced to Miss Porter in the store each was harboring a concealed grudge against the other. Neither admitted even to himself that this grudge was caused by jealousy, or that Miss Porter had anything whatever to do with it.

Blackie was mad because Tom snored intolerably. This had never before bothered him in all the years of their association; but now he became very indignant about it. Tom had no business to keep a man awake like that. If he couldn't keep from snoring he ought to have the grace to suggest getting a separate cabin. If he didn't make some acknowledgment of his fault pretty soon, or quit it, he—Blackie—would have something to say

about it himself. The fact that he said nothing at all to Tom about it was an indication of trouble. Grudges grow fat on silence.

Tom discovered that Blackie didn't wash the dishes clean. Blackie had no business to be careless that way. If he didn't mend his ways pretty soon, he—Tom—would have something to say about it that Blackie would remember. On the days when it was Blackie's turn to wash the dishes Tom always made an examination of them in his absence, and always found cause for anger. He would wash them over again, pitying himself meanwhile, and then take long walks alone, carefully planning the cutting things he would say to Blackie some time.

Blackie took to staying awake purposely until after Tom went to sleep. Then he would lie in his bunk in the dark, tense with anger, and curse his unconscious partner in savage whispers.

It was near to the spring break-up before the change in their long relationship was vocally acknowledged by either. They had not spoken for four days, and this morning, as Blackie drew up his chair to the breakfast table, he accidentally set one leg of it on Tom's foot.

Tom tried to speak naturally, but his voice shook as he said: "Excuse me, but—but you—you've got your chair on my foot."

Blackie got up quickly. "I beg your pardon," he said thickly. "I didn't mean to—"

The men's eyes met and held. The memory of the friendship that had been theirs was sacred to each, and each fought against the savage spell of hate that jealousy had woven about them; but it was useless.

Tom rose slowly, silently, inch by inch, out of his chair, and, with no other sound than their gradually quickening hoarse breaths, the two men, glaring unutterable hatred into each other's eyes, leaned slowly toward each other, as if drawn together by an invisible, irresistible noose that encircled them and was gradually tightening.

It was Blackie who broke the tension. He broke it with a hoarse, mad, utterly inarticulate scream of animal rage, and lunged at his partner.

The two men went to the floor, locked in each other's arms, and fighting like wildcats. Scratching, gouging, kicking, and striking, they rolled about, bellowing out the accumulated venom of months of silent hatred.

The fight raged all over the cabin for fifteen minutes, and at length, straining and swaying about, they crashed into the door, tearing it from its hinges, and rolled together in the snow outside.

A number of men from the near-by cabins tore the two apart and held them.

"I—I don't want—want to kill you," Blackie panted as soon as he was able to speak. "I—I don't want to do that, but if I get a chance I will—d'ye hear me? I don't want to, but I got to do it if I get a chance. You get out of this town now! Keep away from me, an' get out o' this town! I don't want to kill you."

"I reckon I'll take a chance on it," Tom answered. "If there's goin' to be any gettin' out o' town done, you'll have to do it. I don't want no killin' out o' this myself, but the first time I get a chance, Blackie, damn you, I'm goin' to get you, I am!"

Blackie nodded. "Keep heeled," he said shortly. "The first time I get sight o' you I'm on the shoot. You've had your warnin'."

"It goes double," Tom returned. "You keep this cabin. I'll move."

"You will not! I won't take no favors from you. I'll move myself."

Neither of them would accept the other's interest in the cabin, and they removed their respective belongings to shacks in opposite ends of the camp.

For a week their friends maneuvered successfully to keep them apart, arguing meanwhile unsuccessfully in an attempt to patch up the quarrel.

They continued to call at the store on alternate days, according to the custom they had tacitly formed, and the friends of each waited in tense expect-

tation of the inevitable time of the chance meeting.

The first quarrel took place on a Monday. The following Monday was Blackie's allotted day for calling at the store.

"She ain't here," Alganik answered his inquiry for Miss Porter. "Gone out somewhere with Tacky Smith."

"Tacky Smith!" Blackie echoed blankly. "Tacky— What you want to leave her go out somewhere with a card shark like him for?"

Alganik shrugged. "She's her own boss."

"Yes, I know, but— When'll she be back?"

"Didn't say," Alganik answered tersely.

Blackie went away filled with a vague dread. Smith he had often seen around the store, and thought nothing of it; the store was a common loafing place for all. But that Miss Porter should go out with him! This Tacky Smith was a gambler and a crook and an all-around bad man. Blackie worried alone in his cabin all that afternoon, and in the evening returned to the store.

"Ain't got back yet," Alganik informed him.

"Well, say, hadn't we better get up a party an' go out an'——"

"Aw, don't be an old woman!" Alganik scoffed. "They took the dogs, an' most likely went up on the summit. If they did, they couldn't get back much before midnight. She's been wantin' to ride back o' them huskies o' Smith's for a long time. Likely she'll make a good trip of it now she's out with him."

Blackie went away partially comforted. Smith owned the finest dog team in the entire country, and it was conceivable that she might have wanted to ride behind it. A vague sense of misgiving troubled him, however.

"Dog-gone!" he muttered as he sat on the edge of his bunk, undressing, that night. "I may be a darn old woman, but it don't look real right to me somehow. No, sir!"

The next morning Tom showed up

at the store. Alganik met him with an anxious face.

"There's something maybe you'd ought to know," he confided. "Nellie—she's lit out with that guy Smith."

Tom stared. "Lit—lit out?" he questioned blankly. "What—what d'ye mean?"

"Skipped," Alganik elucidated. "Blown the works. Hiked for the outside with him on a honeymoon tour."

Tom wet his lips and swallowed hard. "I—I don't believe it!" he said hoarsely. "It's a lie! Why, she was here—"

"Don't look reasonable," Alganik agreed. "But when she didn't get in by midnight last night I went over to her shack, and found this note pinned to her pillow."

He handed Tom a note. It read:

DEAR BROTHER: When you read this I will probably be far on my way to the States. I am going with Smith. We love each other, and will be married by the missionary at Bethel. It will be silly for you to follow and try to overtake me. We have the best team in the country and a good start. Good-by, and luck, and love.

NELLIE.

"It's a lie!" Tom croaked when he had read it. "It ain't so. I don't care what she wrote. Why, she was—"

"Notice anything peculiar about the handwriting?" Alganik interrupted.

"Peculiar? Why, it looks a little shaky an' like's if— By the Lord—that's it! It ain't her handwritin'. It's a forgery! That skunk Smith—"

"Just what I think," Alganik agreed. "I don't believe that's her handwritin', though it's a fair imitation of it. Smith—he's gone an'—"

"He's kidnaped her, an' left this note so's to keep any of us from tryin' to follow him up," Tom declared excitedly. "I knowed the thing was a lie. Why, she—"

"S-h-h-h-h!" Alganik warned suddenly. "Here comes Blackie. Easy, now, Tom! Don't you—"

Tom stepped to the door with his hands held high over his head. Blackie, a few steps down the street, crouched with his hand on his hip.

"Nix on that stuff!" Tom warned

sharply. "Not now. Listen to what I've got to say to you first."

He approached the wary Blackie with his hands still held high. In one he grasped the note.

"Read it," he said shortly, handing it to the little man and raising his hand again.

Blackie read.

"Lie!" he yelled. "She ain't done no such thing! Why, she was—"

"I know she ain't," Tom interrupted him. "That's what I'm goin' to talk to you about. Smith—he forged that note an' kidnaped her. He left that here so's we wouldn't make no try to follow him."

"I knowed it!" Blackie wailed. "I knowed last night that somethin' or other in this deal was crooked."

"He's got the best team in the land, an' he's some real musher," Tom said. "He's some handicapped by havin' her to tote along with him, but he'll be hard to catch. There ain't no two men in the camp can work on the trail like you an' me. I reckon we team together till this job's done, an' tend to our shootin' later, huh?"

"Get packed," Blackie answered shortly. "We can get Dutch Louie's dogs an' sled for fifteen hundred. It's the best mushin' outfit left in camp. You pay half?"

"Sure! Make the dicker, an' we'll pack an' hike."

Blackie scurried away to secure the team, and Tom returned to the store.

"We'll get 'em," he assured Alganik grimly. "You better not try to go along. You'd never keep in sight o' me an' Blackie, an' we ain't goin' to have no time to wait for nobody."

"Better make right sure o' how things stand before you start any shooting," Alganik called after him anxiously. "We ain't right sure that note was forged. You'd better—"

"We'll manage it proper," Tom assured him, and hurried out.

Half an hour later, with a sled packed light and drawn by eight of the best dogs in the country next to those of the man they were pursuing,

Blackie and Tom swung out of town, partners once more in the arduous trail work they knew so well and worked at together with such automatic precision and thorough understanding, one of the other, that miles a day were added to the distance traveled by any team they drove over what could be accomplished by the same team with less expert handling.

For eight days they traveled without speaking. Both of them knew that the river was near to the break-up, but neither spoke of it. Ten days out, and one hundred and fifty miles from Bethel, the ice started.

It was in the early morning, and the two men were asleep in their camp in a clump of shrub pine on the first bench of the river bank. The crunching, grinding roar of the moving ice brought both out of their bags to stare at a wonderful sight. Great blocks of ice, some of them a hundred feet square, were moving with the current, swirling about in a titanic commotion. Now and then the channel would jam momentarily, and the huge blocks, crashing into the barrier from behind, would rear on end, standing out of the water fifty and sixty feet. Oncoming blocks would crash into the upended mass, and it would explode with a sharp roar into dozens of great, gleaming fragments of flying ice that showered down onto the jam and dove with great splashes of spray into the clear water in front of it. Then the pressure from behind would become great enough to break the jam, and the whole of it would go out with a reverberating detonation, the while great cakes of ice were thrown high in the air; and the frozen, swirling procession down the river with the swift current would begin once more.

The two men watched for some time in silence, and in silence cooked their scanty breakfast, packed, forced the snarling dogs into the harness, and took up the trail once more.

All that morning the thunder of breaking jams roared in their ears as they wound down along the river bank.

It was nearing noon when they came

upon a trapper's cabin. A heavily bearded man standing in the doorway greeted them.

"Country's gettin' crowded," he observed as they drove up. "Man can't have no more privacy at all. Man an' a woman blowed in las' night an' et with me; now you guys come along an' bother."

"Man an' a woman?" Blackie questioned eagerly. "Las' night?"

"Yeh. I reckon they'd camped with me for the night, but they was honin' to make it across the river 'fore she broke up. Didn't cross none too soon, did they?"

Blackie and Tom turned and gazed at the swirling, grinding chaos of great ice cakes that separated them from the opposite bank. Then they looked at one another, and the eyes of each held a question. Blackie answered it.

"Not a chance," he said decidedly. "No way o' gettin' across, an' she may be days before she clears enough to make it in a boat."

"Find a jam stuck tight enough to give you a chance for your white alley, an' make it across in the clear water just below," Tom suggested.

Blackie snorted. "Find a place was jammed tight enough, an' then build a boat—"

He stared moodily out over the river. "She'll jam right here if that big cake on the other side there turns sideways an' sticks before— She's turn-in'! See that? That'll jam her in this curve, sure. She's stuck! I know it! She's jammin'!"

He turned excitedly to Tom. "This guy's got a 'shovel nose' up on the roof there. If she'll hold water—"

Tom sprang toward the cabin. "Help me down with her," he cried, grabbing one end of the boat on the low eaves of the cabin. "It ain't more'n a hundred an' fifty yards across. As soon as she clears in front o' the jam, we'll—"

"Down with her!" Blackie shouted back jubilantly, grabbing the other end of the boat. "We'll go!"

"That's my boat you're handlin'," the trapper observed mildly. "an' she's worth a hundred an' fifty, but I'll just

chip her in for the privilege o' seein' you two fools die a queer death. That little jam's liable to go out any minute."

The ice barrier was growing larger. Great cakes crashing into it from behind upended and broke, or were forced up onto it, adding to its height. The roar of the great masses grinding together made speech useless. In front of it the water was already nearly free from ice the entire way across the river.

The two men hurried the boat down the bank and slid it off the shore ice into the clear water just under the face of the jam. Then they carried down grub and their tent from the sled, and, with Tom at the oars, Blackie shoved off.

The trapper stood in the doorway of his cabin, smoking and watching the boat's progress speculatively.

The boat was nearly in the middle of the channel before the thing he looked for happened. With a swelling roar, the great jam broke. He saw Tom turn the boat and run its nose fair against the ragged ice wall that towered high above. He saw the two men leap out upon a projecting flat cake and scramble up to the top of the barrier, leaping from cake to cake as the whole mass began to move.

He saw a great block, on which both men lit for a moment on their wild flight back toward the shore, forced upward by the pressure, suddenly shoot high into the air. The men were lifted and thrown from it like two tiny pellets shot from some mighty catapult.

One of them rose and started his mad run again; the other lay quiet on the top of the huge, gradually tilting block of ice on which he had dropped.

The man who still ran was Tom. After a moment he stopped, looked back, and, turning, retraced his way toward where Blackie lay still.

The trapper in the doorway shook his head.

"Might o' made it if he'd o' kep' on," he observed to himself judicially. "Knowed he was a fool."

Tom reached the unconscious Blackie, and, with a quick heave, slung the limp form over his shoulder. Then he turned, and, leaning forward under his burden, started once more on his seemingly hopeless journey toward the shore, seventy-five yards away.

The jam was fairly broken now. On every side of the leaping man great blocks of the tortured ice shot high into the air and crashed down all about him. That he was not crushed was a miracle. Leaping from moving cake to moving cake, stumbling, falling, dodging the flying ice, by a miracle he reached the shore and staggered up to the bank.

The imperturbable trapper came down from his cabin to meet him, and helped him up the bank with Blackie. Arrived at the door, they turned and looked back. The jam was gone. Where Tom had made his way back to the shore from the center of the river was a swirling procession of ice cakes with larger stretches of open water between them that no man could have negotiated.

"Knowed you was a fool," the trapper commented as they laid Blackie on the bunk. "The Almighty takes care o' fools that ain't got the sense to look out for theirselves. No man livin' could 'a' come in over that muss the way you did on his own brains an' feet. You're a fool, an' you was took care of accordin'."

Blackie was not badly hurt. His ankle was sprained severely, and his head was gashed and bruised just back of one ear. He was conscious when they laid him out in the cabin.

"I wasn't clear out," he said huskily to Tom, as the latter sat on the side of the bunk, bathing the injured head. "I couldn't move, but I knew what you were doin'. You sure saved my life, old-timer."

"What about it?" Tom demanded. "You'd 'a' done it for me, wouldn't you?"

"Why, sure!" said Blackie simply.

"Well, then?" said Tom.



"I can't mush on this leg," Blackie began, after a time. "You'll have to hike out alone."

"I reckon so," Tom answered, without any show of enthusiasm.

"Say," Blackie exploded suddenly, "I ain't goin' to marry Miss Porter. Not nohow. All of a sudden I don't seem to care a whole lot about it. You go to it. She promised to marry me, but I know she——"

"She did?" Tom yelled. "Why, she promised to marry me!"

The two men stared vacuously at one another.

"S-say, did—did she borrow some money from you?" Blackie inquired, after a moment.

"Three thousan' dollars," Tom admitted sheepishly.

Blackie nodded. "Wouldn't tell you what she needed it for? Said if you loved her you'd trust her? Uhu! She got nigh four thousan' from me."

"I wonder if Alganik was in on the ——" Tom began.

"Sure!" Blackie said scornfully. "I reckon he sprung that fake note to get us out o' camp so's we wouldn't raise no trouble for him. Two guys tipped me off that Tacky Smith was her husband. One of 'em put up a right hard fight, too; I skinned my knuckles all up on him."

Tom rolled a cigarette, and leaned back in his chair.

"They tell me that Candle country, up north o' Nome, is right," he observed, after a time, with apparent irrelevance. "They do say she's the com-in' land for placer."

Blackie studied the rude ceiling intently. "Well—well, le's get an' outfit together an' go up an' play it this summer," he suggested shakily.

Tom grinned at him fondly. "Sure thing!" he assented heartily. He heaved a great sigh of relief. "You fire-eatin' little fist," he growled affectionately. "Dog-gone! Say, it's awful bum stuff to split a fine pair o' jacks to draw for a phony queen, ain't it?"



## THE UNSEEN MIRACLE

THE Angel of the night when night was gone  
High upon Heaven's ramparts cried "The Dawn."

And wheeling worlds grew radiant with the one  
And undiminished glory of the sun.

And Angel, Seraph, Saint, and Cherubim  
Raised to the morning their exultant hymn.

All Heaven thrilled anew to look upon  
The great recurring miracle of dawn.

*And in the little worlds beneath them—men  
Rose, yawned, and ate, and turned to toil again.*

THEODOSTA GARRISON.



**R**UMORS have been rife all season to the effect that the Century Theater—erstwhile the New Theater—built so enormously and expensively by certain Wall Street experts with art yearnings, and recently the scene of Liebler & Co.'s big spectacles, is to pass into the hands of Sir Herbert Beer-bohm Tree. These rumors have been vigorously denied by the Lieblers and by Sir Herbert Tree; yet they persist. One matter of interest is admitted, and that is that Tree will bring his London company next season for from ten to twenty weeks of repertoire, chiefly Shakespearian, at the Century.

There is a field here for a producing manager of culture, experience, traditions, and original bent. It would be an excellent thing for the American theater if Tree *would* take a house in New York and make productions. Whatever opinions are held of Tree's acting—and they are many—all concede him to be an artist in the presentation of a play. It seems that our present managers, with their present perspective on the theater, have done as much as they can do for it, unaided. They have accomplished much of value. Working from the opposite point of view, they have discovered that the theater cannot be syndicated into a mere business and remain that.

The dramatic art can no more be permanently syndicated, commercialized, subjected to an utterly business control

for material ends, than the passion of a Beethoven sonata can be syndicated, or the immortal progress in the wind-filled wings of the sculptured "Victory"; the speech of light in Rembrandt's pictures, or the infinite revelations intangibly made in the art of great actors; the sweep of epic verse or the sweep of wind on the Colorado ranges; the pure passions of Earth, opening her thousand portals to the spring, or the melody of heaven when "the morning stars sang together." Drama, the summit of the arts, has caught up all these passions and forms of expression, and appropriated them for the expression of its own myriad moods. Dramatic art in the hands of commerce to-day is like a strong and unruly child in the presumed control of a nurse who grows doddering. There is a gate at the end of the garden, meadows beyond, floral and sunlit—and the child will go. For, after all, the true vocation of art and children is to make play and not money!

During the past month the New York theater-going public has had one play and two individual performers to thank for its happiest moments. The play is "The Yellow Jacket," by George Hazelton and J. Harry Benrimo, produced by Harris & Selwyn at the Fulton Theater. The individual performers are Adeline Genée and Harry Lauder.

"The Yellow Jacket" is a Chinese story, dramatized and played in the Chinese manner under the direction of Mr. Benrimo, who learned his Orient in old

San Francisco's marvelous Chinese quarter. The stage is a replica of the Jackson Street Chinese theater before the earthquake.

*Chorus*—Signor Perugini—appears before the bedragoned curtains, robed in jade finger nails and a superabundance of splendiferous mandarin coats, and explains to the audience what each act is to be about. He tells the spectators how they are to receive the play and the players, and further enjoins upon them to remember that the property man—the busiest and most conspicuous person on the stage—is to their eyes invisible.

Signor Perugini is a rich joy in this Mongolianized Greek rôle. How the "old-time" manner and method—so scoffed at by our modern patter artists—justifies itself as the only manner and method when a rôle is written that demands diction, elocution, finely flavored reading, poise, and the ability to project character, sense, and scene through inflection and intonation alone! Signor Perugini's art dates from the time when actors *learned* their craft, learned it under the masters of it. "The Yellow Jacket" could not "get across"—as the stage slang puts it—without the artistry of which he is so able an exponent.

The property man, dressed in the plain black, with little black skullcap, that we see on the ordinary Chinaman who shuffles about our streets, comes out and bangs a crude gong several times, and retires again through the curtains to the stage. The *Chorus*, with sumptuous Oriental deliberateness, expressed in the dignified waddle and the abdominal hauteur of the rich Mongol, takes his departure between the curtains, saying: "I bow; I bow; I bow." It is an exquisite performance, and its consequent applause well earned.

Parting curtains disclose a curious stage picture. Alcoved at the back is the orchestral trio playing weird, but by no means unpleasing, Chinese music—composed by W. Furst—on instruments designed for such sounds, and none other. In front of the orchestra stands Signor Chorus Perugini at a small table. The stage is surrounded by

embroidered or painted curtains. There are two doorways at the back, right for entrances, and left for exits; a single portière hangs over each. To the right of the stage—these lefts and rights are given from the audience's viewpoint—are the properties, the property man, and his two assistants sitting among them.

At a signal from the property man, *Chorus* informs us that *Wu Sin Yin*, *The Great*, governor of the province, is about to enter upon the scene—which has now become a room in his palace—to deplore his sorrow in having as first wife *Chee Moo*, whose charm has waned for him, while his august heart hungers for *Duc Jung Fah*, his second wife.

*Chee Moo* has a baby son, who is supposed to be deformed—only "supposed," however, the supposition being due to the witcheries of *Tso*—Fancy Beauty—maid to *Wu Sin's* second wife, who has cast a spell over the court in order to discredit the first wife, bring about her "honorable demise," and cause the ascension of the second wife to the coveted place on *The Great's* throne.

And let it here be set down that the witcheries of *Tso*, in the person of Antoinette Walker, are more than sufficient to put a spell on any court—even that court of last appeal, the audience. Her performance contains more than witchery, however; it has art, it is acting. Her sweet, clear voice is not the least of her assets.

To return to Messrs. Hazelton and Benrimo's story, after this pleasant digression of the little Walker, *Tai Fah Min*, the father of the second wife, comes to visit *Wu Sin Yin*. He arrives on his milk-white charger; the charger is indicated by the thumping and prancing of the actor. The invisible property man puts down the bowl from which he has been eating rice—real, not imaginary—shuffles forward, and leads away the suggested horse; then, with a bored expression, he returns to his rice bowl.

*Tai Fah Min* and *The Great* arrange for the murder of *Chee Moo* with *Lee*

*Sin*, a farmer, whose wife is *Chee Moo's* maid. *Lee Sin* murders *Tso* instead, "carves her face to look like *Chee Moo*," and serves the head—a red bag—to *The Great* in a basket during tea.

An elderly spirit gentleman appears in heaven—a balcony over the musicians—and tells *Chee Moo* to leave her baby—with his name and ancestry written on his diminutive shirt in her blood—by the roadside, and come to heaven. The baby is a block of wood. While *Chee Moo* is writing, the property man places a stepladder under the balcony, and returns to his place to finish the pot of tea which *Tai Fah Min* and *The Great* began.

*Chee Moo* dies on the floor, then arises and climbs the ladder. *Lee Sin* finds the child, *Wu Hoo Git*, and brings it up as his own. So ends Act I. The curtains fall. Chorus Perugini, in another outlay of mandarin coats, comes before them to expound the past act and the act to come.

It is now twenty years later, we learn from the plump and portly *Chorus'* voluminous remarks. *Wu Hoo Git* is full grown into a leaping, buoyant youth, who demands to know his ancestry, and to see the world, much to the perturbation of his good foster parents.

At the same time, the *Daffodil*, wicked son of *The Great's* second wife, and usurper of *Wu Hoo Git's* throne, walking among his mulberry trees—four ebony stools—and anon smelling a lilac bush—a bunch of paper flowers held to his nose by the property man—is informed by the evil spirits within him that *Wu Hoo Git* is coming to seek his ancestors and his heritage. He sends *Yin Suey Gong*—Purveyor of Hearts—who is so evil that he is hump-backed, to intercept *Wu Hoo Git*, and enmesh him in sensuous pleasures so that his virtuous character shall decay. "Thus," remarks the lipping *Daffodil*, "do I contend with brawn."

Purveyor of Hearts meets *Wu Hoo Git*, as one might say, on the threshold of his young career, and, stays his mounting steps with Antoinette Walker, *redivivus* as *Chow Wan*—Autumn Cloud.

A passing cloud the youth finds her to be, after he has paid his whole purse for her; for an emperor beckons with jeweled finger nails, and Purveyor of Hearts guides *Chow Wan* forth, while she graciously, even eagerly, remarks: "Lead me to his fascinations!"

There is an exquisite love-boat scene ere the *Cloud* passes. This is the deftest moment in the writing and the acting; a moonlit, lily-starred river afloat with love barges drifting into the purple mists, with faint echoes of passion songs stirring the sensuous summer air—all this is conjured into the eyes and ears of the audience through their imaginations. The actual scene of the stage is a bench with *Wu Hoo Git* and *Chow Wan* lolling upon it. Two assistant property men stand behind moving bamboo poles, to represent oars; and one of the orchestra, in full view, rubs sandpaper to make the noise of waves. Good! If Messrs. Benrimo and Hazelton can convert the great American theater public from the art-killing, "show-me," materialistic attitude, into which it seems to have been cemented by a decade of crude mechanical realism, and induce it to use, and enjoy, imagination, they will have accomplished an immense and far-reaching thing for the stage of their day.

The departure of fickle *Chow Wan* awakens *Wu Hoo Git* to the futilities of pleasure. Thenceforth he seeks duty and pure love, climbing mountains of stools, and crossing imaginary torrents, assisted by the leisurely property man, who forgets not to give the mountain peak a final whisk with his long-handled feather duster, after he has adjusted it in the youth's path.

A rather long last act completes the Pilgrim's Progress of these Oriental Bunyans, Messrs. Hazelton and Benrimo. *Wu Hoo Git* weds his lovely *Plum Blossom*, and ascends the throne of his ancestors.

Very good interpretations are given by George Relp, first as *The Great*, and then as *Wu Hoo Git*; and by Reginald Barlow as *Tai Fah Min* and Purveyor of Hearts. The *Plum Blossom* of Juliette Day is a lovely and delicate

bit of sincere and poetic ingenuousness. The costuming is almost unbelievably lavish and beautiful. The satire and symbolism of the play are veracious, and are cleverly worked out.

Harry Lauder, that wonderful little Scotch artist, has entered upon another of his record-breaking successful tours of our great United States. Lauder came to this country excessively featured and advertised in advance, and he lived up to all said of him. Subsequent visits have not lessened his interest for us. He is something of a genius, this little man who learned men and the humor and pathos of humble souls working side by side with them in the coal mines of Scotland.

His methods are not those usually followed by single artists in this country, even by those who exploit types. Lauder sings well, dances with a rich humor, and delivers his patter so that every point tells, but he does more than this—he creates characters and presents them with the large lines and the fine detail of the authentic actor, so that not only the words, but the song and the dance, seem the natural and wholly spontaneous expression of the character. He is an artist in the revelation of the humble. He knows the hearts of simple men, knows them with that affectionate, smiling tolerance we name "humor." His sketches take in caricature and extend to the pathetic. It was in the latter that he made his greatest hit on this New York visit. He did a bit called "The Safest o' the Family." The little song runs:

Oh, I am the safest o' the family,  
I am the simple Johnny Raw,  
For everything my mither blames me,  
And my fether tak's it out on me, and a'!

The character is an idiot boy on his way from school. He is conscious that he is "saft," and the pathos of this recognition and of his yearning for mental light, so simply expressed in a few illuminative actions, almost reaches that larger thing we call tragedy. For instance, look at the idiot boy's play-

things—the glass marbles and bits of metal which shine as he turns them about between finger and thumb. He loves them—blindly—for their promise of light; his yearning over them is like that of the infant which naturally holds out its arms to a lamp. It is the same thought that Ibsen used in the climax of "Ghosts," when Oswald pleads: "Give me the sun!"—the eternal cry of the clouded mind for light.

Lauder does not forget to suggest the evil that lurks in the shadowed thought of the "half-witted." The boy takes a sling out of his pocket, and shows it to some one. Suddenly a vicious look convulses his face, and he shoots, presumably into the eyes of the person to whom he has been showing the sling in such friendly wise. Then, as suddenly, the evil thought passes, and he is playing once more with his shining toys.

The deepest touch of pathos and a suggestion of mystery are combined in the last detail of the sketch—when the boy tells us how the flat bag hanging on the end of a tube can be made to grow and grow forever if one blows into the tube. So much more is suggested than merely a "saft" youth expanding a toy balloon. The mind that cries for light in its darkness demands also its right of creation; its right to expand into beauty and completeness. His eyes, which have been so dull, are nearly radiant with the joy of achievement as he watches the sphere widen with his efforts. Then, in a trice, it bursts in his face. Not a vestige of its beauty is left—only the empty tube to mock him. He covers his eyes with his tattered cap, and stumbles away, weeping before the fate which gave him desire, but denies him fulfillment.

Adeline Genée, dancing at the Metropolitan Opera House, seems more like a lyric of Shelley's than ever, presented as she is on this visit in dignified surroundings, instead of in the hideous extravaganzas that jarred one's aesthetic sense in the days of this radiant sprite's first coming.



# FOR BOOK LOVERS

**J**OSEPH C. LINCOLN has given us another of his inimitable Cape Cod stories in "The Rise of Roscoe Paine," published by D. Appleton & Company.

Mr. Lincoln wisely sticks to Cape Cod and Cape Cod people for the atmosphere and motion of his books, but he has been gradually bringing to them other characters from the outside world.

Roscoe Paine is one of these outsiders, who has brought his invalid mother to the Cape in order that they may both escape the notoriety which the elder Paine—or Bennett, their real name—has brought upon them by his embezzlements.

They live with two of the natives—drawn so picturesquely by Mr. Lincoln—Dorinda Rogers and her husband, Luther Millard Filmore. These two, with a number of other local celebrities, furnish the flavor that always distinguishes Mr. Lincoln's work.

But the real story is the story of Paine's adventures with James Colton, a New York banker, who has established a summer home in Denboro. The young man is constantly in collision with the banker and Mabel Colton, the latter's daughter, and on several occasions is forced, almost against his will, to save the girl's life.

He is unable to overcome his resentment against Colton because of the banker's expressed determination to get possession of a piece of Paine's land.

Fate, however, takes a hand, and uses Paine to carry to success a big financial deal for Colton when the lat-

ter is lying unconscious with a stroke of apoplexy.

It is altogether a good yarn, and one which shows that Mr. Lincoln is developing more and more in the art of novel writing.



"Scientific Sprague," by Francis Lynde, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, while it is not a single continued story, escapes the odium usually attributed to a volume of short stories.

Calvin Sprague is a government chemistry expert, hence his title of Scientific Sprague. He is ostensibly spending his vacation with Richard Maxwell, an old friend, who is the general manager of a Western railroad.

A railroader has his troubles, like other people, of course, but most of them crop up in the regular routine of business, and are disposed of accordingly. But in addition to such ordinary problems, Maxwell from time to time finds himself confronted with difficulties that seem quite foreign to the work of railroad operation.

One tangle after another develops, apparently without cause, and they grow constantly more serious, until finally the very life of the organization seems to be threatened. Sprague amuses himself by applying "scientific" methods to the solution of these troubles, and disposes of each in turn until at last he uncovers a plot, originating in Wall Street, to capture the control of the railroad.

Sprague's methods are the familiar ones of Sherlock Holmes, but never-



theless Mr. Lynde succeeds in making his stories intensely interesting.

Strikes, wrecks, dynamite plots, and pretty much all of the adventures peculiar to railroad operation and maintenance are involved in these stories, and Mr. Lynde is sufficiently familiar with actual conditions to make his narration very realistic.



Another novel by Kathleen Norris, who wrote a best seller called "Mother," has been published by the Macmillan Company under the title of "The Rich Mrs. Burgoyne."

Considered simply as a story, the book need not be taken very seriously, for the thread upon which it hangs is a very slender one and is far from original.

It gives the author, however, an opportunity to express her views on the ever-fresh subject of woman's place and woman's duties in life, and so it will doubtless be said that it is a book every woman ought to read.

Sidney Burgoyne is the heroine. She is a widow who comes to live in a small California town, preceded by a reputation of extraordinary wealth.

Santa Paloma has its woman's club, and, judging from Mrs. Norris' description of its members and their doings, she has no very high opinion of women's clubs. Mrs. Burgoyne obviously agrees with Mrs. Norris in her disapproval of the desperate attempts of the Santa Paloma women to keep up appearances. Ostentation is the one great sin.

In spite of her reputed possession of eight million dollars, Mrs. Burgoyne leads the simple life in Santa Paloma, much to the disgust of Mrs. Willard White, the leader of the town's smart set. She takes care of her two daughters, manages her household, and is in general a paragon of domesticity, finding time, however, to do relief work among the factory girls, and to help Barry Valentine put the local newspaper on its feet.

There must be a love affair, of

course, and this comes to its climax when Valentine hears of the death of his actress wife and learns from Mrs. Burgoyne that she is actually not a millionairess.

The book is full of that sort of false sentiment which is extremely popular at present.



About a year ago a rather unusual story called "The Shape of the World" was published. It attracted little attention in spite of the fact that it was a novel of a good deal of power, and was written with a finish and vigor which are, unfortunately, rare.

The author, Evelyn St. Leger, has just published, through G. P. Putnam's Sons, another book called "The Blackberry Pickers." If one overlooks the lines quoted on the title-page he will find himself puzzling over the significance of the book's name.

"The Blackberry Pickers" does not impress one quite so much as "The Shape of the World," but it is because in the new book the author has made use of rather more conventional material in the construction of the plot. Nevertheless, it is a strong story.

It is the story of two men and a woman—a woman with all of the qualities that make women attractive—and the two men as opposite in character as it is possible to conceive. In fact, it is the contrast between Luke Lummond and Robert Haskell that furnishes the motive of the plot and gives the book its vitality.

In spite of his worthlessness, one cannot withhold from Luke a certain degree of sympathy, for it is made quite clear that he was the victim of circumstances which he could not control because he was unaware of their existence. Rachel Cremayne's interest in him may be attributed, we suppose, to our old friend, the maternal instinct, which is used so often to explain otherwise inexplicable relations between a man and a woman.

The one really unpleasant note in the book is the revelation that Robert Haskell was capable of entertaining a

thought of infidelity with respect to his crippled wife. To be sure, that one thought was not acted upon, and it was promptly banished, but the reader knows that it was there, and, so far as the story is concerned, it is the fly in the amber.



There must be something in the atmosphere of British East Africa that stimulates in every one who goes there a desire to write. Reverend Doctor W. S. Rainsford seemed to be aware of this, for in a preface to "The Land of the Lion," published a year or two ago, he offered, by way of apology for adding another book on East Africa, the explanation that he published it merely for his own pleasure.

Stewart Edward White, lately returned from "hunting big game in Africa," has, of course, made his contribution to the literature on the subject, and Doubleday, Page & Co. has given to the world the result in "The Land of Footprints." He tells us again of the dangers of hunting the lion, the buffalo, and the rhinoceros, and reiterates the information that experienced hunters are divided in opinion as to which of these three beasts is the most dangerous.

He seems not to have had so many hairbreadth escapes as, for instance, Doctor Rainsford or Colonel Roosevelt, perhaps because he demonstrates that he is reasonably expert as a marks-

man, or perhaps because of other reasons.

The sing-sing, the dik-dik, the oryx, the tommy, and the hartebeest are among the old friends whose spoor we follow again across the veldt with Mr. White; we have learned thoroughly that great caution is necessary in tracking a wounded lion or buffalo; and we know the respective merits of a Springfield and a .450.



### Important New Books.

- "Knocking the Neighbors," George Ade, Doubleday, Page & Co.
- "The Green Overcoat," Hilaire Belloc & G. K. Chesterton, McBride, Nast & Co.
- "Rose Royal," E. Nesbit, Dodd, Mead & Co.
- "Elkan Lubliner, American," Montague Glass, Doubleday, Page & Co.
- "Eve," Maarten Maartens, E. P. Dutton & Co.
- "Joyful Heatherby," Payne Erskine, Little, Brown & Co.
- "A Picked Company," Mary Hallock Foote, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.
- "The Best of a Bad Job," Norman Duncan, Fleming H. Revell Co.
- "The Valiants of Virginia," Hallie Erminie Rives, Bobbs-Merrill Co.
- "The Career of Beauty Darling," Dolf Wyllarde, John Lane Co.
- "Broken Arcs," D. Figgis, Mitchell Kennerley.
- "Christmas," Zona Gale, Macmillan Co.
- "The Collector," F. J. Mather, Henry Holt & Co.
- "Linda," M. P. Montague, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.
- "The Sword of Bussy," R. A. Stephens, L. C. Page Co.



## Talks With Ainslee's Readers

WE like this March number of AINSLEE'S.

It reminds us of the month of March itself—stretches of storm and snow and ice, mingled with glimpses of soft spring sunshine, and here and there an April shower, like some timid little old lady, who is so afraid she will miss her train that she reaches the station in time for the train ahead of hers.

Contrast the grim strength of "The Ultimatum" and "Trimmed" with the whimsical tenderness of Ethel Train's story, and the charm of "The Golden Vanitie," and "The Little Palace in the Stars." Then there is Ralph Stock's splendid novel, "The Pyjama Man," as varied in its elements as one of those typical March days that combine the characteristic weather of all other March days in one. True, this number of AINSLEE'S can scarcely be said to come in like a lion and go out like a lamb. But then, the month of March, itself, rarely does so, either. It would be lacking in unexpectedness.

IF certain stories in this number have afforded you unusual enjoyment, we hope you will tell your friends about them. You will probably be doing them a favor; we know you will be doing us one. Please do not take it for granted that they already know about them. That it is possible to take too much for granted is well illustrated by a bit of dialogue now going the rounds:

"Did you tell Spratt that I was a liar and a thief?" demanded Briggs belligerently.

"Why, no," replied Boggs, greatly surprised. "I thought he knew it."

THE complete novel for the April number is one of the most unusual stories that it has been our good fortune to come across for a long time. It is called "Children of the Sun," and its author is Kate Trimble Sharber. Superficially it is fascinating fiction; beneath the surface, in the theory of an eccentric old

doctor, lies a trenchant sermon on the hustle and bustle of modern life.

How would the average physician prescribe for a beautiful young singer, who has become the victim of her ambition; for a minister whose adoration of form has made him insensible to the substance; for a great financier whose pursuit of "the pot of gold" has blinded him to the rainbow that guided him; or for a Greek painter with ideals so high that he has given up hope of ever reaching them?

Can you imagine any circumstances which would justify the marriage of a fascinating young man, a gentleman, to a wealthy, feeble-minded old lady? Do you think it possible that a young man contracting such a marriage could command not only your interest, but your sympathy as well?

We are very anxious for you to begin this story. You will be anxious to go on with it. It will entertain you whether the lesson it teaches appeals to you or not.

E. W. HORNUNG is most widely known, probably, as the creator of Raffles, that prince of amateur cracksmen. It is interesting to note that Mr. Hornung is a connection by marriage of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, the one fiction detective capable, in our opinion, of causing the elusive Raffles loss of sleep.

But Mr. Hornung has achieved reputation in other fields of fiction. His "Peccavi," "Stingaree," "The Rogue's March," "Dead Men Tell No Tales," "No Hero"—which appeared originally as a novelette in AINSLEE'S—and "Denis Dent" will be recalled among his successes. No writer has given us more stirring pictures of the Australian bush.

We are fortunate in being able to give you in the next number of AINSLEE'S a short story by Mr. Hornung, "The Voice of the Charmer." It is set in Australia, and leads to a climax as dramatic as anything to be found in the author's longer works.

IN the same number you will find the first story of a new series by Joseph Ernest. Unless we are very much mistaken, his hero, Jacques Lacroix, aviator, will take his place with Raffles, Brigadier Gerard, Sherlock Holmes, Aristide Pujol, and others, who, in their widely different ways, have come to be looked upon by the reading public as real flesh-and-blood characters rather than mere fictional figures upon which to hang plots.

Nonchalantly intrepid, amiably conceited, incurably susceptible, Jacques Lacroix demonstrates in these adventures a number of surprising, but entirely feasible, uses of the *aéroplane*. Each story is complete in itself, but the series traces his rise from the position of humble mechanic to prominence in the world of aviation, and eventually to wealth and a romantic marriage. In the cross plot is developed the love story of an American heiress. The scenes are laid half in Paris and half in America. The first of Jacques' adventures is entitled "The Episode of the Disappearing Financier."

The fifth story in the experiences of "The Woman With a Past," Anna Alice Chapin's appealing heroine, is called "A Moment's Halt." It possesses all the tender-sad charm of "A Matter of Standard," and "The Edge of the Wilderness."

IN the life of California the Chinaman occupies something of the same place and bears much the same relation to the household as did the old negro mammy in the South. And yet he is comparatively unknown. Few who really understand him have written of him. One of those few is Katherine Taylor Craig. She contributes to the April AINSLEE's a colorful little story of a young Chinese mother, "Peach-Blossom-of-the-Tiny-Feet."

John Fleming Wilson, author of "The Girl Who Never Grew Old," in this present issue, has written a powerful, gripping story for April entitled, "The Woman Who Was Born a Lover."

Stories that lend color and charm to the number are "The White Butterfly," by Jackson Gregory; "Whoso Diggeth a Pit," by Flavia Rosser; "Alien Blood," by Louise Rice; "The Dancer in Scarlet," by Clara Chapline Thomas, and the contributions from F. Berkeley Smith and Helen Baker Parker, which were announced for this month, but which were unavoidably crowded forward by that bugaboo of editors politely called "make-up."

It's a mighty good number—this coming one—crisp, strong, well balanced, and thoroughly entertaining.



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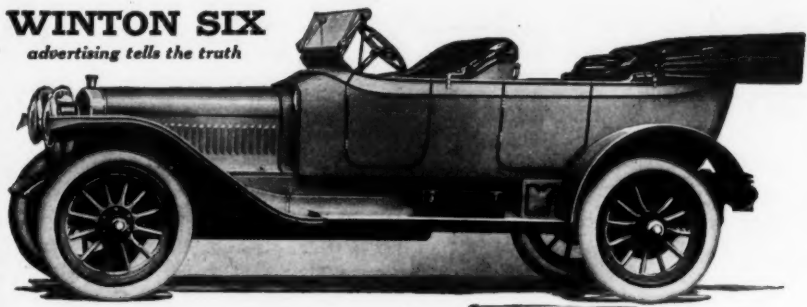
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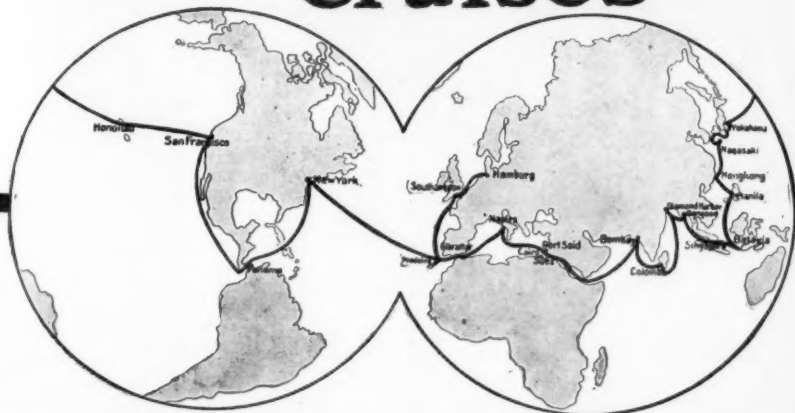
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Also weekly  
sailings by "Prinz"  
steamers of our  
Atlas Service



THE  
MONKS'  
FAMOUS  
CORDIAL

**CHARTREUSE**  
—GREEN AND YELLOW—

HAS STOOD  
THE TEST  
OF AGES  
AND IS STILL  
THE FINEST  
CORDIAL EXTANT

At first-class Wine Merchants, Grocers, Hotels, Cafés,  
Bulger & Co., 45 Broadway, New York, N. Y.  
Sole Agents for the United States.



**This Sign on a Drug Store  
Denotes its Reliability**

**And that Vinol, the Delicious Cod Liver  
and Iron Tonic, May Be Obtained There**

As a body builder and strength creator for feeble old people, delicate children, all weak, run-down persons, and for chronic coughs, colds and bronchial troubles Vinol is unequalled. Vinol contains no oil.

**A Famous Reconstructive Tonic Improved by Modern Science.**



For Sale at your leading Drug Store. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Exclusive Agency Given to One Druggist in a Place. If there is no Vinol agency where you live, send us your leading druggist's name and we will give him the agency.

**TRIAL SAMPLE FREE. CHESTER KENT & CO., Chemists, Boston, Mass.**



## Salesmen Wanted

**DO YOU WANT A GOOD POSITION WHERE YOU CAN EARN FROM \$1,000.00 TO \$5,000.00 A YEAR AND EXPENSES?**

There are hundreds of such positions now open. No former experience as a salesman required to get one of them. If you want to enter the world's best paying profession our Free Employment Bureau will assist you to secure a position where you can earn good wages while you are learning Practical Salesmanship. Write today for full particulars; list of good openings and testimonial letters from hundreds of our students for whom we have recently secured good positions paying from \$100.00 to \$500.00 a month and expenses. Address nearest office, Dept. 108

**National Salesmen's Training Association**

Chicago New York Kansas City San Francisco New Orleans Toronto



## We Ship on Approval

without a cent deposit, prepay the freight and allow 10 DAYS FREE TRIAL on every bicycle. IF ONLY COSTS one cent to learn our unheard of prices and marvelous offers on highest grade 1913 models.

### FACTORY PRICES

a pair of tires from anyone at any price until you write for our new large Art Catalog, and learn our wonderful proposition on the first sample bicycle going to your town.

**RIDER AGENTS** everywhere are making big money exhibiting and selling our bicycles. We sell cheaper than any other factory.

**TIRES, Coaster-Brake rear wheels, lamps, repairs and sundries at half normal prices. (Do Not Wait)** write today for our latest special offer on "Kanger" bicycle.

**MEAD CYCLE CO. Dept T-110 CHICAGO**

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

# \$92<sup>50</sup>—Our Price for Next 30 Days

We now offer the Edwards "Steelcote" Garage (1913 Model), direct-from-factory, for \$92.50. But to protect ourselves from advancing prices of steel, we set a time limit upon the offer. We guarantee this record price for 30 days only. Just now we can save you \$35 or more.

## Edwards Fireproof Steel Garage

Quickly Set Up Any Place

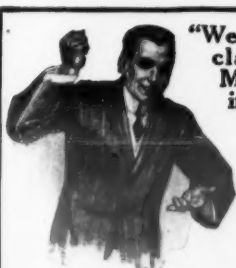
An artistic, fireproof steel structure for private use. Gives absolute protection from sneak thieves, joy riders, fire, lightning, accidents, carelessness, etc. Saves \$20 to \$30 monthly in garage rent. Saves time, work, worry and trouble. Comes ready to set up. All parts cut and fitted. Simple, complete directions furnished. Absolutely rust-proof. Joints and seams permanently tight. Practically indestructible. Locks securely. Ample room for largest car and all equipment. Made by one of the largest makers of portable fireproof buildings. Prompt, safe delivery and satisfaction guaranteed. Postal sent today brings new 56-page illustrated Garage Book by return mail.

(91)



The  
Edwards  
Mfg. Co.

681-651  
Exigleton  
Avenue,  
Cincinnati,  
Ohio



"We make so many claims for our Mennen's Shaving Cream, that they almost seem ridiculous—but the pleasant feature of it is, we can back up every one of them."

Put our cream to the test, and prove for yourself that it will do all we claim for it, and even more.

Mennen's Shaving Cream solves all the big and little troubles of shaving.

Try it at our expense—write today for a free sample. Gerhard Mennen Co., Newark, N. J.

## Mennen's Shaving Cream



Makers of the celebrated Mennen's Borated Talcum Toilet Powder



## Is Largely a Matter of U

You know that a fine job and a big salary are not going to fall into your lap with no effort on your part. You've got to be ready by making yourself ready.

You can easily prepare yourself for a good paying position through the help of the International Correspondence Schools. In your spare time you can acquire training that will qualify you for whatever occupation most appeals to you. It doesn't matter where you live, what you do, what you earn, or what schooling you have had—so long as you can read and write the I. C. S. way is open.

Just mark the coupon opposite the occupation you desire, and mail it today. The I. C. S. will send all the facts showing just how I. C. S. training is adapted to YOUR particular need. It costs you nothing and puts you under no obligation to find out how the I. C. S. can help you.

Every month over four hundred salaries raised are voluntarily reported by successful I. C. S. students of all ages. You can join these men.

### INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

Box 1189 SCRANTON, PA.

Explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I mark X.

Salesmanship  
Electrical Engineer  
Elec. Lighting Supt.  
Telephone Expert  
Architect  
Building Contractor  
Architectural Draftsman  
Structural Engineer  
Concrete Construction  
Mechan. Engineer  
Mechanical Draftsman  
Civil Engineer  
Diesel Superintendant  
Stationary Engineer  
Plumbing & Steam Fitting  
Gas Engineers

Civil Service  
Bookkeeping  
Stenography & Typewriting  
Window Trimming  
Show Card Writing  
Lettering and Sign Painting  
Advertising  
Commercial Illustrating  
Industrial Designing  
Commercial Law  
Automobile Running  
English Branches  
Poultry Farming  
Teacher  
Agriculture  
Chemist

Spanish  
French  
German

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Present Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Street and No. \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

# WHY LOSE YOUR HAIR



## CUTICURA SOAP SHAMPOOS

And occasional light dressings of Cuticura Ointment will prevent it when all else fails. No other emollients do so much for irritated, itching scalps, dandruff, dry, thin and falling hair, or do it so speedily, agreeably and economically.



Cuticura Soap and Ointment are sold everywhere. For sample of each, with 32-p. book, free, address "Cuticura," Dept. 133, Boston.

### TENDER-FACED MEN

Should shave with Cuticura Soap Shaving Stick, Etc. Makes shaving a pleasure instead of a torture. Liberal sample free.

## Brown Your Hair WITH WALNUT TINT HAIR STAIN

Light Spots, Gray or Streaked Hair Quickly Stained to a Beautiful Brown or Black.



### Trial Bottle Sent Upon Request.

Nothing gives a woman the appearance of age more surely than gray, streaked or faded hair. Just a touch now and then with Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain and presto! Youth has returned again.

No one would ever suspect that you stained your hair after you use this splendid preparation. It does not rub off as dyes do, and leaves the hair nice and fluffy, with a beautiful brown color or black if you prefer.

It only takes you a few minutes once a month to apply Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain with your comb. Stains only the hair, is easily and quickly applied, and it is free from lead, sulphur, silver and all metallic compounds. Has no odor, no sediment, no grease. One bottle of Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain should last you a year. Sells for \$1.00 per bottle at first-class druggists. We guarantee satisfaction. Send your name and address, and enclose 25 cents (stamps or coin) and we will mail you, charges prepaid, a trial package, in plain, sealed wrapper, with valuable booklet on hair. Mrs. Potter's Hygienic Supply Co., 1836 Giron St. Bldg., Cincinnati, O.

### I Trust You 10 Days. Send No Money



**32 Hair Switch on Approval.** Choice natural way of straight hair. Send lock of hair and I will mail a 32-inch, short atom, fine human hair switch to match. A big bargain. Retail \$2 in ten days or sell it and GET YOUR SWITCH FREE. Extra shades a little more. Enclose 50 postage. Write today for free beauty book of latest styles hair dressing, high grade switches, perms, wigs, pompadours, and special bargains in Ostrich Feathers. WOMEN AGENTS WANTED. ANNA AYERS, Dept. B 33 22 Quincy St., Chicago

## Send 4c. for 5 Samples of Ayer Toilet Necessities

and see for yourself why three generations of refined women have recognized HARRIET HUBBARD AYER'S preparations as pure, effective and delightful dressing. Send 4c. in stamps brings you trial package of Ayer's Face Powder, Face Cream, Luxuria (the premier cleansing cream), Nail Bleach and Cuticle Softener. Send today.

HARRIET HUBBARD AYER, 330 E. 34th St., New York



## DIAMONDS WATCHES JEWELRY ON CREDIT

**SEND FOR CATALOG**

## BRILLIANT JEWELRY COMPANY

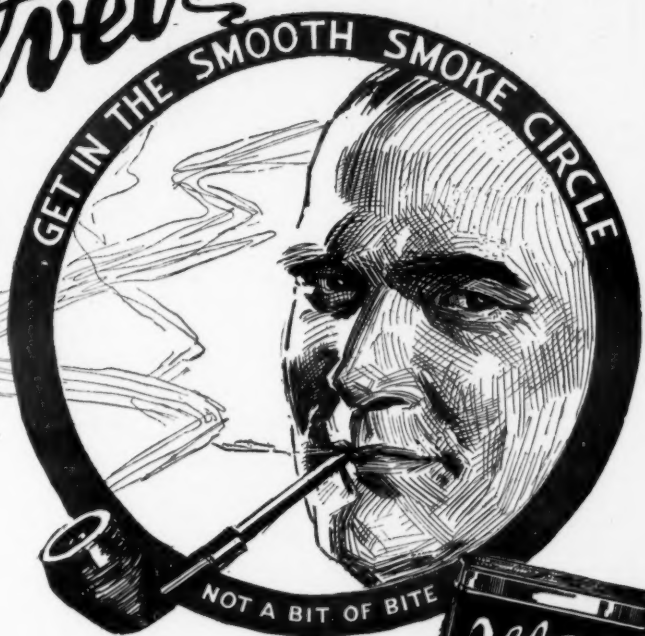
**704 MARKET ST. SAN FRANCISCO CAL.**

WRITE MAIL ORDER DEPT. M.



# Velvet

THE  
SMOOTHEST  
TOBACCO



In this uncertain world  
all things are smooth to  
"the man on the inside."

*Lippett & Myers Tobacco Co.*

**10¢ TINS**  
Handy 5¢ bags  
One pound glass  
humidor jars



## Improve Your Complexion, Your Figure and Your Health



Thousands of beautiful women thank Dr. James P. Campbell's Safe Arsenic Wafers for their clear, beautiful skin, their graceful figure and good health.

If your complexion needs improvement, if you are weak, nervous, thin, tired, or in any respect not at your best, try Dr. Campbell's Wafers today. Used by men and women for twenty-seven years with more than satisfactory results.

Absolutely safe and harmless to anybody. Guaranteed under the Pure Food and Drugs Act, June 30th, 1906.

**50 CENTS AND \$1.00 PER BOX.**

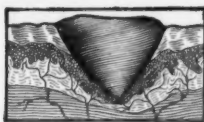
at all good druggists, or sent in plain cover by mail from  
**RICHARD FINK CO., Dept. 55, 415 Broadway, New York City**

THE LAXATIVE FOR MAN AND WOMAN.



BOTTLED AT THE SPRINGS, BUDA PEST, HUNGARY.

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.



# Note This Corn

See What Must be Done—and How

If you pare it, that means to take off the top layer. The root is left to grow. If the blade slips, there may be infection.

Any old-time treatment means just brief relief. Every few days you are compelled to repeat it.

The only cure is complete removal. And the B & B wax—a famous chemist's invention—does that without discomfort.

Apply the little Blue-jay plaster, and the pain stops instantly.

Then this wonderful wax begins to loosen the corn. In 48 hours the whole corn comes out, without any pain or soreness. *That's the end of that corn.*

So many folks know this that a million corns monthly are removed in this simple way. For your own sake, try it now.



A in the picture is the soft B & B wax. It loosens the corn.  
B protects the corn, stopping the pain at once.  
C wraps around the toe. It is narrowed to be comfortable.  
D is rubber adhesive to fasten the plaster on.

## Blue-jay Corn Plasters

Sold by Druggists—15c and 25c per package

Sample Mailed Free. Also Blue-jay Bunion Plasters.

Bauer & Black, Chicago and New York, Makers of Surgical Dressings, etc.

(237)

## CONGRESS

PLAYING CARDS

GOLD EDGES  
For Social Play  
Artistic Designs  
Rich Colors  
New Each Year  
Club Indexes  
AIR-CUSHION FINISH

50¢ PER PACK

1913  
OFFICIAL RULES  
OF  
CARD GAMES  
Moyle up-to-date  
SENT FOR 15¢ IN STAMPS

ISSUED  
YEARLY

## BICYCLE

PLAYING CARDS

CLUB INDEXES  
In use in all  
The Civilized  
Countries of  
The World  
For General Play  
IVORY OR AIR-CUSHION FINISH

25¢ PER PACK

THE U. S. PLAYING CARD CO., CINCINNATI, U. S. A.



**Lowest Prices**

Get my **BOOK** FREE

All popular breeds of chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys. Highest scoring strains. Best eggs. 20 years experience. Lowest prices. Best incubators too. You lose money if you buy before seeing my big illustrated Poultry Book. Worth dollars to you sent free, for name and address. Write quick.

J. W. MILLER CO., Box 218, Rockford, Ill.



"Can take a pound a day off a patient, or put it on. Other systems may temporarily alleviate, but this is sure and permanent."—N. Y.

Sun, Aug., 1891. Send for lecture: "Great Subject of Fat."

No Dieting. No Hard Work.

**DR. JOHN WILSON GIBBS' TREATMENT FOR THE PERMANENT REDUCTION OF OBESITY**

Harmless and Positive. No Failures. Your reduction is assured—reduces to stay. One month's treatment \$5.00. Mail or office, 1370 Broadway, New York. A PERMANENT REDUCTION GUARANTEED.

"Positive and permanent."—N. Y. Herald, July 6, 1892.

"On Obesity, Dr. Gibbs is the recognized authority."—N. Y. World, July 7, 1890.

## CRESCA FOREIGN DELICACIES

**Rich, Unusual Tasty Things from Many Lands.**

For a two-cent stamp we will send our palatable color booklet giving full particulars as well as many suggestions for menus and a host of distinctive, rare recipes. Address: CRESCA COMPANY, Importers, 361 Greenwich St., N.Y.



Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.



## Prevented—Stopped

**M**OTHERSILL'S, after thorough tests, is now officially adopted by practically all the Great Lakes and New York Steamship Companies running south and many Transatlantic lines.

Four years ago Mr. Mothersill gave a personal demonstration of his remedy on the English Channel, Irish Sea and the Baltic, and received unqualified endorsement from leading papers and such people as Bishop Taylor Smith, Lord Northcliff, and hosts of doctors, bankers and professional men. Letters from personages of international renown—people we all know—together with much valuable information are contained in an attractive booklet, which will be sent free upon receipt of your name and address.

Mothersill's is guaranteed not to contain cocaine, morphine, opium, chloral, or any coal-tar products. 50c box is sufficient for twenty-four hours, \$1.00 box for a Transatlantic voyage. Your druggist keeps Mothersill's or will obtain it for you from his wholesaler. If you have any trouble getting the genuine, send direct to the Mothersill Remedy Co., 411 Scherer Bldg., Detroit, Mich. Also at 19 St. Bride St., London, Montreal, New York, Paris, Milan, Hamburg.

## Crooked Spines Made Straight



### Use the Sheldon Method 30 Days at Our Risk.

**YOU** need not venture the loss of a penny. No matter how serious your case, no matter what else you have tried, the Sheldon Method will help you and probably wholly overcome your affliction. We are so sure of this that we will make a Sheldon Appliance to suit your special condition and let you decide, after 30 days, whether you are satisfied. We make this unusual offer simply because the 16,000 cases we have treated absolutely prove the wonderful benefit the Sheldon Method brings to spinal sufferers, young and old.

There is no need to suffer longer or to bear the torture of old-fashioned plaster, leather or steel jackets. The Sheldon Appliance gives an even, perfect and adjustable support to the weakened or deformed spine and brings almost immediate relief even in the most serious cases. It is as easy to put on or take off as a coat, does not chafe or irritate, is light and cool. The price is within reach of all who suffer. You owe it to yourself, or the afflicted one in your family, to find out more about it. Send for our book free at once.

PHILO BURT MFG. CO., 305 3rd Street, Jamestown, N.Y.

## DIAMONDS ON CREDIT

Send for Free Catalog, telling all about our Easy Credit Plan. Over 2,000 illustrations of Diamonds, Watches, Jewelry, etc., at bargain prices. Select anything desired, have it sent to your home or express office, all charges prepaid. If entirely satisfactory, send one-fifth of purchase price and keep it, and divide balance into eight equal amounts, payable monthly. Bargains in watches. Write today for Catalog.

**Loftis Perfection Diamond Rings**

**Credit Terms:** One-Fifth down, balance in 8 equal monthly amounts.

The four rings here shown are the most popular, although we show all sizes in our large, illustrated Catalog.

**Loftis**  
BROS & CO. 1845  
108 North State St., Chicago, Ill.  
Branches: Pittsburgh, Pa., and St. Louis, Mo.

Address Dept. L845

**No Woman Will Remain Beautiful Without "BROWNATONE" HAIR STAIN**

If she permits her hair to become faded or streaked with gray. This loss of attractiveness can so easily be avoided.

Is the One Stain that Anyone can use with absolute safety to the hair and scalp, and with the certainty of being black if you prefer. It will not rub or wash off, and contains none of the objectionable ingredients.

Prepared in Two Shades: Golden or Medium Brown; Dark Brown or Black. Trial Size 25c. Full Size \$1.50 and guaranteed by leading druggists, or mailed direct upon receipt of price.

**Send This Coupon or Trial Bottle**

I enclose 25c (stamps or coin) for a trial size of "Brownatone" and your booklet on the care of hair.

Name .....  
Address .....  
Town ..... State .....

The Kenico Pharmaceutical Co., 300 E. Pike St., Carington, Ky.

## PARISIAN GEMS

Look like diamonds: wear  
like diamonds—flash like diamonds



1 CARAT GEM \$5.00  
14K SOLID GOLD RING



1 CARAT GEM \$7.50  
14K SOLID GOLD RING

### A REAL Gem Full of Fire and Brilliancy.

The most remarkable scientific discovery of the age; a perfect substitute for genuine diamonds; not an imitation in any sense.

Parisian Gems have the scintillating beauty of genuine diamonds; will cut glass and retain their brilliancy like real diamonds.

We defy every diamond test! Parisian Gems have no foil or backing; no paste; none but experts can distinguish them from genuine diamonds.

Set only in Genuine Solid Gold 14k. mountings.

Write for illustrated price list.

SENT ON APPROVAL.

PARISIAN GEM CO.,  
Dept. B, 621 Broadway, New York City.

## Asthma and Hay Fever

relieved by HIMALYA. Send for Free Trial Bottle of Himalya, the valuable remedy for Hay Fever and Asthma.

We have hundreds of reliable testimonials showing positive and permanent cures to persons who have suffered for years after all other remedies and change of climate had failed.

Write today to the  
**HIMALYA CO**  
295 Howard St.,  
Detroit, Mich.

## You Can Weigh What You Should Weigh

You can, I know it, because I have reduced 25,000 women and have built up as many more—scientifically, naturally, without drugs, in the privacy of their own rooms; I can build up your vitality—at the same time I strengthen your heart action; can teach you how to breathe, to stand, walk, and relieve such ailments as nervousness, torpid liver, constipation, indigestion, etc.

One pupil writes: "I weigh 82 pounds less, and I have gained wonderfully in strength." Another says: "Last May I weighed 100 pounds, this May I weigh 120 pounds, and oh! I feel SO WELL."

Write to-day for my free booklet.  
**SUSANNA COCROFT, Dept. 34,  
624 Michigan Boul., Chicago**  
Author of "Growth in Silence," "Self-Sufficiency," etc.



### Ten Days' Free Trial

allowed on every bicycle we sell. We Ship on Approval and trial to anyone in the U.S. and prepay the freight. If you are not satisfied with the bicycle after using it ten days, ship it back and don't pay a cent.

### FACTORY PRICES

Do not buy a bicycle or a pair of tires from anyone at any price until you receive our latest Art Catalog of high grade bicycles and sundries and learn our unheard-of prices and marvelous new special offers.

### IT ONLY COSTS

a cent to write a postal and FREE by return mail. You will be sent you information. Do Not Wait; write it NOW!

**TIRES, Coaster-Brake, rear wheels, lamps, parts, repairs and sundries of all kinds at half retail prices.**

**MEAD CYCLE CO. Dept. T-110 CHICAGO**

## BILLIARDS AT HOME

Have your own Burrows Billiard and Pool Table. A few cents per day will buy it. No special billiard room needed. Write for particulars.  
**THE E. T. BURROWS CO., 16 Free St., Portland, Me.**

## DON'T WEAR A TRUSS!



C. E. BROOKS, the Discoverer

Brooks' Appliance, the modern scientific invention, the wonderful new discovery that cures rupture will be sent on trial. No obnoxious springs or pads. Has automatic Air Cushions. Binds and draws the broken parts together as you would a broken limb. No salves. No lies. Durable, cheap. Pat. Sept. 10, '01. Sent on trial to prove it. Catalogue and measure blanks mailed free. Send name and address today.

C. E. BROOKS, 1046-A Brooks Bldg., Marshall, Mich.

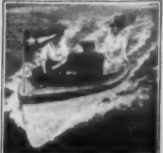
## MULLINS STEEL BOATS CAN'T SINK

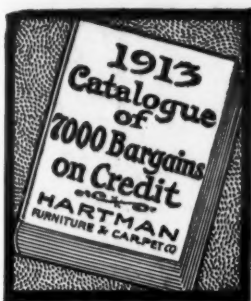
Built like Government Torpedo Boats, of tough, puncture-proof, galvanized steel plates, so securely joined together that a leak is impossible. The Mullins Steel Boats are guaranteed against puncture, leakage, waterlogging, warping, drying out, opening seams, etc. MOTORS: The Low-Victor 4-Cycle and Ferro 2-Cycle. Light, powerful, simple, can be operated by the beginner, start like automobile motors, one man control, never stall at any speed, exhaust silently under water. Beautiful Illustrated Book, free.

THE W. H. MULLINS CO., World's Largest Boat Builders, 325 Franklin St., Salem, Ohio

STEEL ROW BOATS AND CEDAR CANOES

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.





Send a postal or write a letter today giving just your name and address, so we can send you by return mail, **postpaid**, this new, big, splendid catalogue of 7,000 money-saving bargains. This new book gives complete descriptions, illustrations and prices, and explains our easy payment plan, with 30 days' Free Examination Guarantee. Write today.

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**Plan Ever Offered.** No interest—no extra charges—no red tape—nothing but a square, honest plan of allowing you rock-bottom cash prices, with privilege of arranging payments to suit your individual convenience. Our multi-million dollar resources, buying power and trusting power enable us to offer you terms no ordinary concern could even dare to think of. Learn about this fair, square, honest method. Investigate it now.

—22 Great Stores—1,000,000 regular customers. Offer greater proof of honest, fair and square dealing be desired? Our customers are friends. We've proved ourselves to 1,000,000—can prove ourselves to you. Through our tremendous buying power—taking entire factory outputs—at low prices and discounts—we can save you money on the best quality in the world. Send for our big, new, 7,000 Bargain Catalogue today. It gives you facts and figures with a guarantee of 15 to 50% saving on any article of furniture or housefurnishings. Don't neglect—write a postcard today.

**Thirty Days' Free**

**Examination Guarantee.** Honesty has built our tremendous business. Every customer must be satisfied and more than satisfied. You can get absolutely anything you want from our immense stock on 30 days' free examination in your own home—your money back in full to the last penny without a word or question if you are not positively and thoroughly pleased. You are the judge—our guarantee is legally binding and absolute.

**Here Are Six Regular CREDIT BARGAINS**

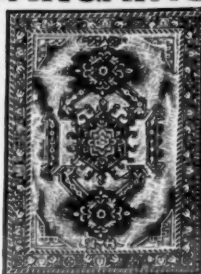


**No. 383**  
Famous "Hartwell" Guaranteed Rocker, American quartered oak, upholstered with "Imperial" leather. The nearest approach to real leather. Monarch steel spring seat construction. Carved front posts. Price only **\$3.49**  
Terms: 50c cash, 50c monthly

Every great bargain here shown in catalog—big photographs—long exact descriptions—with 7000 others. **GET IT!**



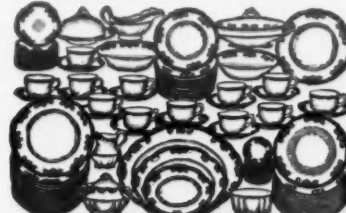
**No. 373**  
**Don't Wait!** Order this elegant solid oak three-piece Mission, artistic design library set at once. It is made of solid oak, beautifully finished in Golden or Fumed Oak. Full set of tempered springs in chair and rocker, upholstered in Imperial Spanish leather, which has wearing qualities of genuine leather. The table measures 42x56 inches, has a large drawer, and book shelf below. Price of this high quality full set is less than half what you would pay at any retail store. **\$9.85**  
Terms, \$1.00 Cash—75c Monthly.



**No. 394—You have never before had a chance to buy a rug bargain anywhere near the equal of this celebrated "Arcadia" Brussels Rug. It is standard 9x11 foot size; surface is of select woven yarns woven in a beautiful Empire design with combination colorings of green, red and blue. Highly recommended and guaranteed for wear. Price **\$10.85**  
Terms, \$1 Cash—75c Monthly**



**No. 363.** The most outstanding Dining Table Bargain of modern times. Just an example of the Grand Values we offer in our big free catalog. Made of seasoned hardwood—finished American quartered oak, beautifully polished. Top measures 45 inches in diameter and is supplied with extra leaves so as to extend out to six feet in length. The massive pedestal is supported by mission designed legs. Price only **\$10.85**  
Terms: \$1.00 cash, 75c monthly



**No. 343.** Coin Gold Porcelain 100-Piece Bargain Dinner Set  
Extra value at our very low price. Made by the world's largest pottery. It is double-fired and beautifully glazed: has heavy gold band decorations, warranted not to come off, and is furnished in assortment of pieces as illustrated. **\$9.65** especially priced. Price complete set of 100 pieces  
Terms: \$1.00 cash, 75c monthly



**No. 323**  
Mission library table. Unique design, massive solid oak, 48x33 inch top, two drawers, shelf and large hinged legs. Choice of Golden or Fumed Oak Finish. **\$6.75**  
Price only  
Terms: \$1.00 cash, 75c monthly

**WE PROMISE YOU:** Absolute satisfaction on anything you ever order from us—on **OPEN FREE Credit** Charge account or money back. All we ask is the chance to prove it to you. Write us and enjoy our Big 7000 Bargain Book. You'll get it by Return Mail, **FREE!** All Postage Paid.

**HARTMAN FURNITURE & CARPET CO.** Largest, oldest and best known home furnishing concern in the world.  
3942 WENTWORTH AVE., CHICAGO  
Established 1855—58 Years of Success 22 Great Stores—1,000,000 Customers

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.



**We Actually  
Save You \$7.50**

**On This Rocker  
—Our Factory Price**

**\$8.50**

Sixteen dollars is what your local dealer would ask for this handsome chair. Then note our low price—only \$8.50. It's a beautifully designed MASTER-BUILT Rocker, made of finest quarter-sawn oak. Marokene leather-cushion. Height, 35 inches; width, 31 inches; depth, 21 inches. Completed and finished in color you may choose. Shipped to you in four sections—sembled in a few minutes. Anyone can do it.

## Write Today for Our Free Book On MASTER-BUILT Furniture

Pocket the dealer's profit. Remember, we ship direct to you, and eliminate all "go-between" profits. You save from 25% to 35%. This big free book of ours—with hundreds of fine pictures—shows many MASTER-BUILT designs that you want. There are chairs, settees, tables, couches, etc.—all built by the well-known Brooks method—every piece guaranteed to please or your money right back! You want this Free Furniture Catalog! Write today sure.

## This Quarter-Sawn Oak Settee Shipped Direct to You—only \$14.50

Your local dealer has it priced at \$23.00. Solid quarter-sawn oak—beautiful grain—Marokene leather cushions. Length, 67 inches; height, 37½ inches; depth, 21 inches. We complete and finish in any color you choose. Shipped in four sections. A rare settee opportunity for you.

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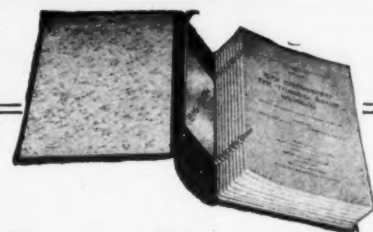
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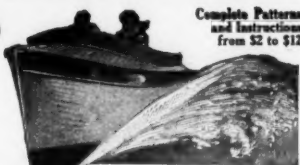
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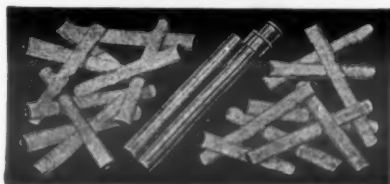
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